Mumbai - English
High School

MODERN ENGLISH COMPOSITION AND PRECIS WRITING

By
MARGARET J. MILLER
Author of
"50 MODEL ESSAYS"

MODERN

ENGLISH COMPOSITION

AND PRECIS WRITING

This is a new book by the author of the popular best-seller *50 Model Essays* and *The Second Book of 50 Model Essays*. Like these *Modern English Composition and Precis Writing* is also meant primarily for those appearing for the Matriculation, School Leaving and Senior Cambridge examinations. Even college students and those whose knowledge of English has grown a little rusty, will find this book useful.

The author writes from long experience as a teacher in India for she was formerly Senior Mistress at the Queen Mary High School for Girls, Bombay, and at present is the Assistant English Mistress at Wimbledon County Schools for Girls in England. She has therefore knowledge of the exact requirements of students and has based this book on questions which generally appear in Matriculation, School Leaving and Senior Cambridge examination papers.

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After a thorough discussion of the origin of words, prefixes and suffixes, synonyms and antonyms, idiomatic expressions, punctuation, and figures of speech, the author deals with composition and essay writing in great detail.

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The Second Book of 50 Model Essays

D. B. TARAPOREVALA SONS & CO. PRIVATE LTD.

Treasure House of Books

210, Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road, — — — Bombay 1.

© 1960 D. B. TARAPOREVALA SONS & CO. PRIVATE LTD.

Thirteenth edition, 1966

PRINTED IN INDIA

(G-ESS)

Printed by B. G. DHAWALE at KARNATAK PRINTING PRESS, Karnatak House, Chira Bazar, Bombay 2, and Published by RUSSI JAL H. TARAPOREVALA, for Messrs. D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Private Ltd., 210, Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Fort, Bombay.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to the following, who have kindly given permission for the use of copyright material contained in this volume:

Professor J. B. S. Haldane, and the B.B.C. for extracts from "Reshaping Plants and Animals" published in "The Listener" 1943.

Dr. C. E. M. Joad for extracts from "The Face of England."

The Hogarth Press for extracts from "The Death of the Moth" by Virginia Woolf.

Mr. Val Gielgud and Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd. for the paragraph on "Clouds" from "One Year of Grace."

The Oxford University Press for extracts from "The Player and His Art" by Sir John Martin-Harvey.

Professor J. B. S. Haldane and the B.B.C. for the paragraph from "Reshaping Plants and Animals."

The Hogarth Press for the paragraph from "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid" by Virginia Woolf.

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Part I

COMPOSITION

Chapter I

ORIGIN OF WORDS

Words are the materials from which a composition is built. It is therefore essential that the writer should understand the fine distinctions between words, and be able to choose those which most exactly convey his meaning.

English is derived from two main sources—Anglo-Saxon and Latin. The Latin was introduced, through French, at the time of the Norman Conquest (1066). At this time, the majority of the Saxon nobles were killed, and their places taken by Normans, but the Saxon peasants remained on the land and cultivated it. Therefore the vocabulary which dealt with simple, homely things associated with peasant life remained Saxon, but words dealing with legal or administrative affairs or abstract ideas were of French origin.

Examples:

	Saxon	*Latin* (or Greek).
Nouns.	Father (and all other family words.)	Primate
	Cow (and all other domestic animals.)	Chancellor
	Cottage	Legislation
	Bed	Aspirant
	Hand	Statute
	Wood	Ambition
	Field	Eminence
		Assurance
		Justiciary
Verbs.	Chop	Meditate
	Plough	Persuade
	Dig	Magnify
	Cook	Encourage
	Sweep	Execute

You will notice that the Saxon word is usually shorter and simpler than the Latin one. There are certain suffixes, (or endings) which reveal at once that a word is of Latin origin,

e.g., *-ation*, *-ary*, *-ance*, *-ant*, in nouns, and
-ate, *-ize*, *-age* in verbs.

If you are writing of simple, everyday things, try to use a vocabulary which is chiefly Saxon; if your subject is *abstract*, *philosophical*, or *theoretical*, you will need more Latin words.

(Note that the three words in italics in the last sentence are themselves all of Latin origin.)

Here are two passages which illustrate the difference of effect: Saxon words predominate in the first, Latin in the second.

1. So they worked away at the rock and planted it, and smoothed the sand down round it till the tide began to turn.

"Now, then" they all cried at once, "we must come away home or the tide will leave us dry. We have mended all the broken seaweed, and put all the rock pools in order, that nobody will see where the storm swept in last week."

That is the reason why the rock pools are always so neat and clean,—because the Water Babies come in shore after every storm, and sweep them out and comb them down, and put them all to rights again.

2. The conspirators, hearing of his departure, immediately concluded that their design was betrayed. They flew to arms before their schemes were ripe for execution, and before the arrival of the Danes, in whose aid they placed their chief confidence. The Earl of Hereford was checked by Walter de Lacy, a great baron in those parts, who, supported by the Bishop of Worcester and the Abbot of Evesham, raised some forces, and prevented the Earl from passing the Severn or advancing into the heart of the kingdom. The Earl of Norfolk was defeated at Fagadun, near Cambridge, by Odo, the Regent, assisted by Richard de Bienfaite and William de Warenne, two justiciaries.

EXERCISES

Change the vocabulary from Latin to Saxon, thereby simplifying the style of the passage. Use your dictionaries to help with the meanings.

1. Unloose the quadruped from the vehicle, stabulate him, give him nutritious aliment; and when the orient of the morning appears above the horizon, I will award you pecuniary compensation for your amiable hospitality.

2. Go and endeavour to instil into your venerable female ancestor the art of imbibing by suction the product of the domesticated fowl.

3. It is undeniably to be deprecated that while many of our compatriots are unable to procure a modicum of nutrition, an unenlightened plutocracy may enjoy a maximum of luxurious indulgence. Surely this is an unwarrantable blemish on our much flaunted democratic institutions.

4. Due to the prevailing inadequacy of the means of transport, it has been found impracticable to effect the desired transfers of sections of the population between the scheduled areas.

5. Adduce the equine quadruped
To element aquatic,
Ingurgitation, it is said,
Must still be automatic.

6. Scintillate, scintillate, diminutive asteroid!

Chapter II

PREFIXES

The central, or main part of a word is called the *root*. Changes of meaning can be made by adding different *prefixes* (syllables at the beginning) or *suffixes* (syllables at the end).

A prefix usually changes the meaning of a word, a suffix changes its grammatical function.

e.g. employ — verb
employment — noun
unemployment — noun of opposite meaning.

Here is a list of the most common prefixes and their meanings.

SAXON

be a prefix extending and intensifying the meaning.
e.g. come, become
girt, begirt
grudge, begrudge

for (*a*) a prefix strengthening the meaning
e.g. lorn (lonely) forlorn (very lonely)
(*b*) a prefix of contradiction
e.g. bid, forbid
swear, forswear

fore a prefix indicating something happening beforehand.
e.g. foretell, — to tell in advance
foresight
foretaste

un a contradictory prefix.
e.g. true, untrue
usual, unusual

LATIN

a, ab, abs. — away from
e.g. avert, — to turn away from
abduct, — to lead away from
abstract, — to draw away from

a, an — without
e.g. atheist, — without God
apathy, — without feeling
anarchy, — without rule

ad, at — towards
(before another consonant, the *d* often changes, and doubles the consonant)
e.g. attract, — to draw towards
advert, — to turn towards

ante — before
e.g. antedate, — to date beforehand
antecedent — happening before

anti — against
e.g. anti-aircraft
(NOTE:—in the word *anticipate*, the prefix is really *ante*, but the vowel has been attracted by the following *i* and changed to match it.)

amphi or *ambi* — both
e.g. amphitheatre — with seats on both sides
ambidextrous, — able to use both hands
amphibious, — able to live both on land and in water

arch — chief
e.g. archangel, — chief angel
archbishop, — chief bishop

auto — self
e.g. automobile, — moving by itself
autobiography — written by oneself

bene — good
e.g. benevolent, — well-wishing
benefit, — something bringing good
benediction, — blessing, (literally—a good word.)

bi — two
e.g. bisect, — to cut in two
biped, — having two legs
bicycle, — having two wheels

circum — round
e.g. circumscribe, — to write round, or enclose
circulate, — to carry, or send round.

cata — down
e.g. catastrophe, — downfall
cataract, — a moving down

contra	—	against		
	e.g.	contradict,	—	to speak against, to say the opposite
		contravene,	—	to go against (laws)
di	—	two		
	e.g.	dilemma,	—	choice of two difficulties
		diphthong,	—	two letters made into one
dia	—	through		
	e.g.	diameter,	—	measurement through
		dialogue,	—	(literally) talking through or throughout
epi	—	upon		
	e.g.	epidemic,	—	a disease falling upon people
		epitaph,	—	written upon a tombstone
		epidermis,	—	the skin upon the inner skin
eu or *ev*	good			
	e.g.	eulogy,	—	praise, good words
		evangelist,	—	the bringer of good tidings
extra	—	outside		
	e.g.	extraordinary,	—	outside the ordinary run
		extramural,	—	outside the walls
hemi	—	half		
	e.g.	hemisphere,	—	half a sphere
hexa	—	six		
	e.g.	hexagon,	—	a six-sided figure
hepta	—	seven		
	e.g.	heptagon,	—	a seven-sided figure
		heptarchy,	—	a collection of seven kingdoms
homo	—	the same		
	e.g.	homonym,	—	the same name
		homogeneous,	—	of the same kind
hyper	—	beyond		
	e.g.	hyperbole,	—	description going beyond the facts
		hyper-sensitive	—	sensitive beyond ordinary limits
hypo	—	under	—	a person speaking under pretence
	e.g.	hypocrite,		
		hypotenuse,	—	a line under a right-angle
		hypodermic,	—	under the skin

in — (a) in, into
e.g. inspect, — to look into
induce, — to lead into
— (b) not
e.g. inaccurate, — not accurate
inconvenient, — not convenient
inefficient, — not efficient

inter — among
e.g. international, — among nations
interrupt, — to break in among
introduce, — to lead among

male — bad
e.g. malevolent, — wishing harm

meta — change
e.g. metaphor, — a change of expression
metabolism, — a change of substance

mono — one
e.g. monoplane, — having one plane
monotone, — on one tone

ob — out
e.g. obliterate, — to wipe out
obsolete, — out of date

omni — all
e.g. omniscient, — knowing all
omnipotent, — all powerful

pan — all
e.g. pantheon, — temple of all the gods
panoply, — complete armour
panorama, — scene visible on all sides

penta — five
e.g. pentagon, — five-sided figure
Pentateuch, — the first five books of the Bible

peri — around
e.g. perimeter, — the measurement around
periphrasis, — a roundabout expression

per — through
e.g. perspire, — to breathe through
perspicacious, — seeing through something

para — aside or beside
e.g. paradox, — something apparently aside from the truth
paragraph, — with something written beside (This refers to the old custom of putting the sign ¶ in the margin beside each new paragraph.)
paraphrase, — one expression to set beside another

philo — love of
e.g. philosophy, — love of wisdom
bibliophile (here used as a suffix — a lover of books.)

poly — many
e.g. polyglot, — speaking many tongues
polygon, — a figure with many sides
polytechnic, — teaching many subjects

pre — before
e.g. precedent, — going before
pre-natal, — before birth

pro — before
e.g. prologue, — spoken before
prophet, — a man who knows beforehand
programme, — description written before-

pseudo — false
e.g. pseudonym, — a false name
pseudo-politician, — a false or pretence politician

retro — backwark
e.g. retrograde, — going backward
retrospect, — looking backward

quasi — almost
e.g. quasi-human, — almost human

sub — under
e.g. submarine, — under the sea
subterranean, — under the earth

sym — together
e.g. sympathy, — a feeling with, or together
symphony, — many sounds together

tele	— afar		
	e.g. telegraph,	—	written from far
tri	— three		
	e.g. triangle,	—	having three angles
	tricycle,	—	having three wheels
trans	— across		
	e.g. transport,	—	carrying across
vice	— instead of		
	e.g. viceroy,	—	instead of the king
	vice-captain,	—	instead of the captain

Chapter III

SUFFIXES

Suffixes are used more frequently to change the parts of speech than to change the meaning. The following list will show how they work.

-able or ible— to form an adjective indicating "able to," or "concerned with"
e.g. profitable — concerned with profit edible — able to be eaten

-acious — to form an adjective indicating "characterised by," "full of"
e.g. audacious — full of audacity
mendacious — full of mendacity

-acity — to form an abstract noun of quality
e.g. sagacity, perspicacity

-acy — to form an abstract noun of quality
e.g. lunacy

-age — to form a noun
(a) with a collective idea
e.g. assemblage
(b) a place
e.g. vicarage, cellarage
(c) a condition
e.g. tutelage, bondage
(d) an institution
e.g. orphanage
(e) the cost of something
e.g. postage

al or -ial — to form an adjective indicating "pertaining to"
e.g. adjectival, phenomenal, parochial

-ality — to form an abstract noun with the idea of quality
e.g. finality, commonality

-an, -ean, ian— to form
(a) an adjective indicating "belonging to" or "engaged in"
e.g. herculean
(b) a noun with a similar sense
e.g. artisan

-ance, or -ence, -ancy — to form an abstract noun of quality, action, or process

e.g. abstinence, impertinence, constancy

-ant or -ent (a) to form adjectives
e.g. constant, indignant
(b) to form a noun denoting agent or instrument.
e.g. informant, agent, instrument

-ar — to form adjectives indicating "pertaining to," "of a kind"
e.g. linear, peculiar

-ar, -er, -or — to form nouns denoting agent or person concerned
e.g. registrar, assessor, farmer

-ard — to form a noun indicating a person who does something discreditable
e.g. drunkard

-arian — to form adjectives and nouns denoting a member of a sect, or a person of a certain age
e.g. vegetarian, octogenarian

-ary — to form
(a) adjectives indicating "pertaining to," "of a kind"
e.g. imaginary
(b) nouns indicating "one belonging to" or "engaged in"
e.g. visionary, beneficiary

-ate — to form
(a) nouns of office or state
e.g. magnate
(b) adjectives made from past participles
e.g. designate
(c) a common verb suffix for verbs of Latin origin
e.g. originate, exterminate

-ation — to form abstract nouns from Latin verbs in -ate
e.g. subjugation, extermination

-ative — to form adjectives from Latin verbs
e.g. superlative, argumentative

-bility — to form abstract nouns from adjectives in -able, -ible
e.g. capability, adaptability

-cide — to form nouns with a sense of "killer"
e.g. homicide, parricide

-cy — to form abstract nouns
e.g. regency

-dom — to form nouns expressing state, condition, rank, domain
e.g. freedom, officialdom, kingdom

-ee — to form nouns denoting persons affected by the action of a verb
e.g. employee, payee

-eer — to form nouns denoting a person concerned
e.g. profiteer, seer

-en — to form
(a) adjectives, usually denoting material
e.g. woollen, silken, wooden
(b) verbs from adjectives and nouns
e.g. lighten, embolden

-eous — to form adjectives indicating "of the nature of"
e.g. igneous, beauteous

-er, -ier — to form nouns indicating trade or profession
e.g. farmer, baker, financier

-ern — to form adjectives
e.g. southern, northern

-ery -ry — to form nouns indicating
(a) a class of goods
e.g. drapery, gunnery
(b) a condition
e.g. outlawry, penury
(c) a place for keeping something
e.g. brewery
(d) conduct
e.g. foolery
(e) abstract noun formed from a noun connected with a person
e.g. witchery, popery

-ess — to form nouns in the feminine
e.g. authoress, mistress

-eth, -th — to form nouns indicating fractions
e.g. seventh, fortieth

-etic — to form adjectives indicating possession of certain powers or functions
e.g. magnetic, synthetic

-faction — to form abstract nouns indicating action or condition
e.g. satisfaction, putrefaction

-fic — to form adjectives suggesting "making," "causing," "producing"
e.g. soporific, terrific

-fication — similar to "faction" (see above)
e.g. mystification

-fold — added to numbers to indicate multiplication
e.g. sevenfold

-ful — to form adjectives meaning "full of"
e.g. fanciful, masterful

-fy — to form verbs with the sense of "to make"
e.g. beautiful, dignify

-head, hood — to form nouns of condition
e.g. motherhood, godhead

-ic, -ical — to form adjectives indicating "in the nature of"
e.g. choleric, spasmodic, periodical

-ician — to form nouns indicating persons connected with
e.g. musician, magician, physician

-ine — to form adjectives indicating "pertaining to," "in the nature of"
e.g. leonine, asinine, sanguine

-ion — to form abstract nouns with the notion of verbal action
e.g. ascension

-ious, -ous — to form descriptive adjectives
e.g. luscious, specious

-ise, -ize — a Latin verb suffix
e.g. temporise, deodorise

-ish — to form adjectives indicating "some approach to," "in the neighbourhood of"
e.g. greyish, heathenish

-ism — to form abstract nouns with the idea of
(a) action, e.g. criticism
(b) typical conduct, e.g. heroism
(c) system or principle, e.g. atheism
(d) characteristic, e.g. Gallicism
(e) morbid condition induced by the abuse of something, e.g. alcoholism

-ist — to form noun indicating person engaged in certain practices or holding certain principles
e.g. bigamist, cyclist, tobacconist, atheist

-itis — to form nouns indicating inflammation
e.g. tonsilitis, appendicitis

-ity, -ty — to form abstract nouns
e.g. intensity, plenty

-ive — to form adjectives with the idea of "tending to," "given to"
e.g. pensive, inducive

-less — to form adjectives with the idea of "free from," "without"
e.g. defenceless, hopeless

-like — to form adjectives indicating resemblance to
e.g. childlike, doglike

-ling — (a) diminutive adjective or noun
e.g. darling, princeling
(b) added to nouns denotes "something belonging to" or "concerned with"
e.g. hireling

-ology — to form abstract nouns indicating "the study of"
e.g. anthropology, etymology

-ly — to form
(a) adjectives denoting "having the qualities of"
e.g. seemly
(b) to form adverbs
e.g. beautifully, attractively

-ment — added to verbs, forms an abstract noun
e.g. astonishment, contentment

-ness — to form abstract nouns denoting state or condition
e.g. sickness, baldness

-oid, -oidal — to form adjectives with idea of "resembling"
e.g. ovoid, tabloid

-ory — to form
(a) adjectives indicating "in the nature of"
e.g. cursory
(b) nouns of similar sense
e.g. dormitory, ambulatory

-ose, -ous — to form adjectives indicating "abounding in"
e.g. otiose, grandiose, bibulous.

-ship — to form abstract nouns indicating office or status
e.g. headship, lectureship

-some — to form adjectives indicating "adapted to," "productive of"
e.g. handsome, gamesome

-ster — to form nouns denoting occupation
e.g. gangster

-trix — to form feminine nouns
e.g. testatrix

-tude — to form abstract nouns
e.g. turpitude, gratitude

-ulent — to form adjectives indicating "characterised by"
e.g. turbulent

-ulence — to form abstract nouns connected with *-ulent* above
e.g. turbulence

-ure — to form abstract nouns indicating the result of something done
e.g. manufacture

-ward — to form adjectives and adverbs indicating direction
e.g. onward, downward

-wise — to form adjectives indicating manner
e.g. slantwise

-y — to form abstract nouns
e.g. pity, piety

DIMINUTIVE SUFFIXES (Indicating Smallness)

Saxon	-ock	e.g.	hillock
	-ling		kidling
	-kin		pannikin
	-ing		farthing
Latin	-ule		ridicule
	-el		morsel
	-let		billet, rivulet
	-ette		statuette
	-cle		particle
Greek	-isk		asterisk

Chapter IV

SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS

Having learnt your prefixes, you will easily understand that *synonyms* are words with *similar* meaning, and *antonyms* are words with *opposite* meaning.

English is rich in synonyms, but the student who wishes to write well must be able to distinguish the fine shades of meaning between words.

Exercise 1

Here is a series of words suggesting light, but it would not be possible to use them indiscriminately in the following sentences. Pick out the best word for each sentence: do not use the same word twice. Use either as a noun or a verb.

glare, gleam, glitter, glimmer, glow, flash, flicker, beam, shimmer, glisten, glint, twinkle, sparkle, flare, blaze.

(a) There was a blinding ———— as the bomb exploded.
(b) The ———— of the sun on the white buildings made my eyes ache.
(c) There was a ———— of phosphorescence on the dark water.
(d) As she moved, one caught the ———— of the diamonds in her rings and earrings.
(e) As they piled on the dry branches, the ———— of the fire could be seen from a great distance.
(f) When the draught from the open door caught the candle, it gave a ———— and went out.
(g) The ———— of the searchlight swept the sky.
(h) The calm water ———— in the moonlight.
(i) He pulled something from his pocket, and I caught the ———— of gold.
(j) The tinsel on the Christmas tree ———— in the light of the coloured lamps.
(k) A very small light ———— at the far end of the tunnel.
(l) The inflammable material ———— up as soon as the lighted match fell on it.
(m) The sunlight ———— on the snow which covered the branches of the trees.

(n) They thought that the house was empty until one of them caught a faint ———— of light shining through a crack in the shutters.

(o) The travellers were pleased to sit by the warm ———— of the kitchen fire.

EXERCISE 2

Here is a series of words indicating *sound*. Incorporate each one in a sentence, and bring out the difference in meaning.

blare, shriek, rumble, thunder, roll, hum, jangle, peal, jingle, thud, clatter, clink, crunch, hoot, splash, twitter, roar, chatter, murmur, drone, babble, chuckle, chink, clack, clang, bluster.

EXERCISE 3

Many words of similar meaning have definite distinctions in use. Show by using them in sentences, the differences between them.

(a) lure, entice, defraud, fleece, deceive, cheat, swindle, circumvent, ensnare, hoax, waylay.

(b) playfellow, pal, colleague, mate, accomplice, partner, helpmate, crony, associate, collaborator, confidant, confederate, coadjutor.

(c) docile, subservient, cringing, deferential.

(d) belief, knowledge, supposition, opinion, fancy, conviction, prejudice.

(e) proud, haughty, vain, arrogant, overbearing, imperious.

(f) home, goal, resting-place, destination, harbour, haven, port, landing-place, terminus, station.

(g) inform, acquaint, mention, express, intimate, communicate, notify, advise, announce, report, declare, enlighten.

ANTONYMS

An antonym should immediately suggest the exact opposite of a given word. Thus, the antonym to *add* is *subtract*. *Take away*, which means the same thing, is not an exact antonym because it contains two words instead of one.

EXERCISE 4

Find the antonyms to the following:—

expedite, variety, accept, zenith, credit, pleasure, busy, liberality, agree, innocent.

WORDS WHICH SAVE SPACE

Certain Latin words compress a great deal of meaning into a small space, and in formal writing or speech, where dignity is to be desired, these words are very useful.

Here are some examples:—

inconsolable — not to be made better by sympathy.
sinecure — a post in which one is very well paid for doing practically nothing.

As you see, such words are very useful for conveying an exact meaning in a small compass.

EXERCISE 5

Try to find single words which mean the same as the phrases printed in italics.

(a) Their passports were *examined with minute attention to detail.*
(b) The doctor said he must avoid work *which requires long continuance in a sitting position.*
(c) My neighbour is *a person who prefers to keep himself too much to himself and to be unnaturally discreet.*
(d) Many animals *pass the winter in sleep.*
(e) This house is a home for *people who are recovering from an illness.*
(f) His guide help up a finger *to give him warning.*
(g) In a voice *that brooked of neither question nor delay,* the intruder ordered him to put up his hands.
(h) Nobody liked her because of her *habit of parading her advantages.*
(j) The mayor will hold a *ceremonial introduction to certain offices* tomorrow.
(k) He is a *person who is pretending to be somebody else for his own advantage.*

EXERCISE 6

Give the meaning of the following in a few simple words:—

antipathy,	articulate,	austerity,
arbitrary,	cadaverous,	compliance,
derelict,	desecration,	distraught,
epitome,	ephemeral,	emaciated,
fatuous,	fastidious,	gregarious,
gratuitous,	grotesque,	heterogeneous,
hypochondriac,	histrionic,	iconoclast,

imminent,	indigent,	nnocuous,
lacerate,	lethargy,	lugubrious,
munificent,	mythology,	nefarious,
plutocrat,	precocious,	parenthesis,
posthumous,	ribaldry,	retrograde,
reiterate,	rotund,	superannuated,
satellite,	sinister,	somnambulist,
terrestrial,	transient,	ortuous,
versatile,	vindicate,	voracious,
vulnerable,	virago,	zenith.
zealous,		

EXERCISE 7

Write sentences to show the differences in meaning of the following pairs of words:—

1. allusion, illusion
2. comprehensive, comprehensible
3. contemptible, contemptuous
4. continuous, continual
5. credible, credulous
6. counsel, council
7. expedient, expeditious
8. exhausting, exhaustive
9. facility, felicity
10. illustrious, illustrative
11. imperial, imperious
12. ingenious, ingenuous
13. incompatible, incomparable
14. intimate (verb), intimidate
15. immunity, impunity
16. inconstant, inconsistent
17. impassive, impulsive
18. illegible, ineligible
19. luxurious, luxuriant
20. masterly, masterful
21. momentary, momentous
22. precedent, president
23. principle, principal
24. sensible, sensitive
25. virtual, virtuous

N.B.—Be careful to make the sentences long enough to give a good illustration of the meaning. "He had an illusion," will not do.

Chapter V

IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

English is very rich in figurative expressions which have grown up through the course of hundreds of years. Some of these are taken from proverbs, some from literature, some from sports and pastimes.

1. Literature is the source of many picturesque phrases of which the following are examples:—

a dog in the manger (Æsop's fables)—a person who prevents others from having something which he does not want himself.

cutting the Gordian knot (Greek myths of the labours of Hercules)—using a drastic remedy to overcome a difficulty.

a sop to Cerberus (Greek myths)—a bribe.

between Scylla and Charybdis (Homer's Odyssey)

or

on the horns of a dilemma—between two very difficult courses.

sowing dragon's teeth (Greek myths)—doing something which will cause you trouble later.

to cross the Rubicon (Roman history)—to take a decision from which there can be no withdrawal.

to kill the fatted calf (The Bible)—to make a great welcome to someone.

according to the law of the Medes and Persians (The Bible)—unalterable law.

to demand one's pound of flesh (Shakespeare)—to insist on one's rights, even when they injure others.

to turn the other cheek (The Bible)—to be meek towards an aggressor.

the pot calling the kettle black (Æsop's fables)—accusing someone of a fault of which one is guilty oneself.

Exercise 1

Use the following idiomatic expressions in sentences to show their meanings:—

(a) blowing his own trumpet.
(b) a fool's paradise.
(c) to play second fiddle.

(d) Hobson's choice.
(e) to turn over a new leaf.
(f) to take the bit between one's teeth.
(g) to be on one's beam ends.
(h) the boot is on the other leg.
(j) to show the white feather.
(k) to take the bull by the horns.
(l) to be beyond the pale.
(m) out of the frying-pan into the fire.
(n) to have an axe to grind.
(o) to cry for the moon.

EXERCISE 2

Find idiomatic or proverbial expressions to fit the following phrases:—

(a) A person who moves constantly from one job to another acquires no proficiency.
(b) He put up with the insult and made no reply.
(c) To have intelligence beyond one's years.
(d) To look for a thing where it is almost impossible to find it.
(e) To make one action serve two purposes.
(f) He was not the right man for the position.
(g) To exhaust one's strength in more ways than one.
(h) To be in a very dangerous position.
(j) Everything takes time.
(k) He liked interfering in the business of others.
(l) He was trying to do too many jobs at once.
(m) Do not delay in getting things repaired, or they will rapidly grow worse.
(n) He will not live long.
(o) To spend energy uselessly.
(p) To speak briefly.

Chapter VI

PUNCTUATION

Punctuation is a very important aid to clearness of expression. Without it, the differences in meaning which are expressed in speech by the intonation would be lost. Compare, for instance, the distinction between these two sentences.

What do you think? I sell mangoes for an anna each!

What! Do you think I sell mangoes for an anna each?

Fashions in punctuation change, and it is not always possible to lay down hard and fast rules. Different writers also have individual preferences for certain types of punctuation, but in general, the uses are as follows:—

1. *Commas, Semi-colons, Full-stops.*

   These are used to indicate pauses. At a comma, you pause while you count *one*, at a semi-colon, while you count *two*, and at a full-stop, while you count *four*.

2. Commas are used to separate words, phrases and clauses appearing in a series. If, in a series of words, the last two are joined by "and," the comma between them may be omitted.

   e.g. In the garden, roses, carnations, sweet peas and cannas bloomed in profusion.

   Happily, noisily, excitedly, the children climbed into the buses.

   The guard blew the whistle, porters banged the doors, passengers said a last goodbye to their friends, and the train drew out of the station.

   Commas are also used to separate main and subordinate clauses.

   e.g. Although it was raining hard, he had no umbrella.

   Commas often indicate parenthesis, or a part of the sentence which could be taken out bodily without destroying the sense of the sentence.

   e.g. Mr. Nehru, who is travelling from Bombay by air today, will speak at a meeting here tomorrow.

   (Brackets or dashes could be used here instead of commas if desired.)

Mr. Nehru (who is travelling from Bombay by air today) will speak, etc.

or

Mr. Nehru — who is travelling from Bombay by air today — will speak, etc.

N.B.—There is a difference in meaning between sentences in which an adjectival clause is separated from the rest of the sentence by commas, and one where the reading goes straight on without punctuation.

e.g. The boys who have worked well will receive a reward. This indicates that only those boys who have worked well will be rewarded and not the lazy ones.

The boys, who have worked well, will receive a reward. This indicates that all the boys will be rewarded as they have all worked well.

Nouns in apposition are separated by commas from the rest of the sentence.

e.g. Uday Shankar, the celebrated dancer, will visit this theatre shortly.

3. The Semi-colon (;)

A semi-colon indicates a longer pause than a comma. A series of actions following each other slowly, can be separated by semi-colons.

e.g. The passengers, kneeling on the planks, were engaged in rolling their bedding mats busily; they tied up bundles; they snapped the locks of wooden chests.—(J. Conrad, "The End of the Tether.")

She put on her spectacles because they made her look older and thus gave her confidence; took them off again because she despised herself for requiring such a prop; put them on once more because she usually wore them at this hour while digesting the "Daily Herald;" then sat on the sofa; stood by the window.—Stella Gibbons.

4. A Full-stop indicates the end of one thought, or a series of connected thoughts. Never allow two ideas which have no connection with each other to be contained in one sentence, as in this one:—"She had a long, straight nose and an aunt in Calcutta."

5. The colon (:).

The colon is often used to express the idea "for instance," or "for example" and is therefore used before quotations.

e.g. All that had been Kutz's had passed out of my hands: his soul, his body, his station, his plans, his ivory, his career.—(J. Conrad, "Heart of Darkness.")

As Hamlet says:

"There's a divinity which shapes our ends
Rough-hew them as we will."

A colon is usually used before a speech if the speaker is mentioned first.

e.g. Then arose the prophet and said: "Hear, O Israel."

A colon followed by a dash is placed at the end of instructions preceding an exercise or examination question.

e.g. Punctuate the following passage:—

Express the following amounts in £.S.D.:—

A colon is also used in a sentence as the centre of a balance when two opposite points of view are expressed.

e.g. It was claimed that Charles was a good father: it could hardly be denied that he was a bad king.

6. The Question mark is used after direct questions only, not after indirect.

e.g. "What are you going to do next?" he asked his sister.

but

He asked his sister what she was going to do next.

(Some eighteenth century writers used question marks after indirect speech, but it is not correct to do so nowadays.)

Never use a question mark in brackets as a sign of sarcasm. This is a very cheap method of trying to be smart.

e.g. The Russian government manifested its usual understanding (?) attitude.

7. The Exclamation mark is used to indicate some intense emotion and occurs most frequently in speech.

e.g. "John Eyres, by all that is marvellous!" cried the Frenchman.

"Alas, we are betrayed!" sobbed the woman.

Do not use more than one exclamation mark. This repetition merely destroys the effect intended.

8. The Dash, when used singly, indicates a break in the sentence, or a change of mood or construction, or another way of saying the same thing.

e.g. She struck me as beautiful — I mean she had a beautiful expression.

The houses were packed to bursting — a blur of white faces could be seen at the windows.

He arose and went out — and the wilderness without a sound took him into its bosom again.

9. Inverted commas or Quotation marks enclose the actual words of a speaker.

e.g. "I will tell you the whole story," said he.
"When I arrive at the castle," he asked, "what shall I do next?"

They are also used to separate a word or phrase from the rest of the sentence, or to indicate that it is used in a special sense.

e.g. The adjective "nice" is used far too often.
He went to see "Anthony and Cleopatra" (meaning the play of that name).

Single inverted commas are used to separate a quotation within a quotation.

"I have learnt the speech beginning 'Friends, Romans, countrymen' from beginning to end," said the boy proudly.

10. The Apostrophe is used to show the possessive singular.

e.g. Mary's dress. The man's bicycle.

The possessive plural is indicated by an apostrophe placed after the noun, e.g., the boys' caps. The horses' legs.

If the plural of a noun is not formed by adding "s", the apostrophe indicating the possessive plural is placed before the final "s", not after it, e.g. The men's clothes. The women's conversation. The children's toys.

The Apostrophe is also used to indicate the omission of a letter or letters in a word.

e.g. don't — do not; 'tis — it is.

The apostrophe is also used in a few cases to form the plural when there would otherwise be confusion of meaning.

e.g. Dot your i's and cross your t's.
If if's and and's were pots and pans.

11. Brackets are used for separating a parenthesis — that is a clause or phrase that does not belong grammatically to a sentence.

e.g. A man I knew quite well, (he was actually my next door neighbour) told me all about it.

Double dashes are often used instead of brackets.

e.g. I heard all around me like a pent-up breath released — as if a thousand giants had said "Phoo!" — and felt a dull concussion which made my ribs ache suddenly. — (J. Conrad, "Youth.")

12. Asterisks indicate some words omitted. A row of dots can also be used for this purpose.

e.g. The Kingdom of heaven is like a man who built his house upon a rock****and it fell not.
The man that has no music in htmself.
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils.

EXERCISES

1. Punctuate the following:—
   (i) For goodness sake lets show that a whole weeks work hasnt been wasted.
   (ii) Hamlet is Shakespeares most famous play.
   (iii) Its no use making excuses she warned.
   (iv) The poem I learned yesterday begins I wandered lonely as a cloud.
   (v) The Cross Key is a good hotel he said if you want a quiet holiday.
   (vi) I do not know I wandered lonely as a cloud but I believe Wordsworth wrote it.
   (vii) Did you say come in.
   (viii) Round can be used as many different parts of speech.
   (ix) As it happens I was taking to Abdul the cloth merchant yesterday.
   (x) The journey was moreover of great financial value to the merchants.

2. Punctuate the following in two different ways, pointing out the differences in meaning thus indicated:—
   (i) On approaching the station I met the children whom I sent with a message.
   (ii) Only the boys who were good swimmers were allowed to bathe.
   (iii) Jones said he was very stupid. (3 ways).
   (iv) Her mother replied Mary wrote that letter.
   (v) What do you want another apple.

3. Rewrite the following passage, putting in all the necessary punctuation, and paragraphing where required:—

   Just before midnight the door was softly unbarred and the gentle Ariadne, showed herself with a torch in her hand are you awake prince Theseus she whispered yes answered Theseus with so little time to live I do not choose to waste any of it in sleep then follow me said Ariadne and tread softly what had become of the jailer

and the guards Theseus never knew but however that might be Ariadne opened all the doors and led him forth from the darksome prison into the pleasant moonlight Theseus said the maiden you can now get on board your vessel and sail away for Athens.

Chapter VII

FIGURES OF SPEECH

Language is said to be used figuratively when it is intended to convey not its *literal* meaning, but a secondary meaning which is conveyed to the reader by association of ideas. Thus, *bitter* used literally, refers to taste, but "a bitter disappointment," or "bitter words" are figurative expressions.

Figures of speech serve two main purposes:

(a) to give beauty and variety,

(b) to illustrate and explain.

Many figures of speech combine both these uses.

Figures of speech can be classified as follows:—

1. *Those depending on Similarity*: Simile, Metaphor, Allegory, Fable, Personification, Parable.
2. *Those depending on Contrast*: Antithesis, Paradox, Oxymoron, Epigram, Irony, Sarcasm, Innuendo, Hyperbole, Litotes, Euphemism, Pun.
3. *Those depending on Association*: Metonymy, Synecdoche, Transferred Epithet.
4. *Those depending on Arrangement*: Interrogation, Apostrophe, Repetition, Climax.
5. *Those depending on Sound*: Alliteration, Assonance, Onomatopoeia.

1. (a) A SIMILE is a comparison expressed by the words "like" or "as".

e.g. My love is like a red, red rose.
The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath.

A Simile is sometimes worked out at great length,

especially in epic poetry. It is then called a *sustained* or *epic* simile.

e.g. From their black tents, long files of horse, they streamed,
As when some grey November morn, the files
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Arabian estuaries,
Or some frore Caspian reed-bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian sea-board — so they streamed.
— (Mathew Arnold, "Sohrab & Rustum.")

(b) A METAPHOR is an implied, or unexpressed comparison.

In a simile, both sides of the comparison are expressed; in a metaphor, they are condensed into one thought. Thus, "the silver moon" means "the moon as bright as silver."

e.g. He is the bane of my existence,
The ship ploughed through the waves.
Error is a hardy plant: it flourishes in every soil.

Metaphor can also be sustained by continuing the comparison in a series of images.

e.g. There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of our life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
In such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves
Or lose our ventures.
— (William Shakespeare, "Julius Caesar.")

MIXED METAPHORS

When two different images are used at the same time, a Mixed Metaphor results. This should be avoided, although examples are to be found in the works of some of the greatest writers.

e.g. He was ever a light to guide us on, behind which we could always shelter ourselves.
To take arms against a sea of troubles.

(c) An ALLEGORY is a series of metaphors expanded into a tale, with the object of teaching some abstract truth. It is a form of literary composition. The greatest

English writers of allegory are Spencer — "The Faerie Queene," Bunyan — "The Pilgrim's Progress," Langland — "Piers Plowman."

Fable and Parable are similar to Allegory, but shorter. The most famous fables are those of *Æsop*, and the most famous parables are found in the Bible.

(d) PERSONIFICATION is the giving of the qualities of life to inanimate beings or abstractions, such as night, love, dawn, etc. It is a figure very frequently used by poets.

e.g. Dawn touched the hills with her rosy fingers.
Night dropped her veil over the land.

2. (a) ANTITHESIS is the illustration of a meaning by contrast. A sentence containing antithesis is usually in two parts, one balanced against the other.

e.g. Speech is silvern; silence is golden.
The road sees the passage of all kinds of men: the millionaire sails over it in his high powered car, and the beggar plods along it on his tired, sore feet.

Sustained antithesis is known as *parallelism*. This consists of two or more antithetical phrases of similar construction, balanced against each other.

e.g. The proud Grandee still lingers in his perfumed saloons, or reposes within damask curtains; wretchedness cowers into truckle-beds, or shivers hunger-stricken into its lair of straw: in obscure cellars Rouge-et-Noir languidly emits its voice of destiny to haggard, hungry villains; while Councillors of State sit plotting, and playing their high chess-game, whereof the pawns are Men.

(b) An EPIGRAM was originally an inscription to a hero, and summed up his qualities as tersely as possible. Later the name came to be given to any terse saying. It often embodies a contrast.

e.g. Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue.

(c) A PARADOX is an expression which at first sight contradicts itself. Its true meaning becomes apparent on further consideration.

e.g. He who would save his life must lose it.
Having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

(d) OXYMORON is the qualifying of a noun by an adjective having an opposite significance. It is a kind of condensed paradox.

e.g. His honour, rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful made him falsely true.

(e) IRONY and SARCASM are closely related to each other.

A contrast is made between the literal meaning of the word used, and the meaning implied.

Irony. The words used convey the opposite of their literal meaning.

e.g. You're a fine friend to desert me in my hour of need.

Sarcasm is used in the same way, but is meant to be bitter and offensive.

e.g. How these Christians love one another.
—(Spoken by Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice.")

(f) INNUENDO is a figure which hints or suggests a meaning (usually unpleasant) which it does not say straight out.

e.g. He will be careful not to draw attention to the way he keeps his accounts, (suggesting that he has falsified them).
The matter is postponed till the Greek Kalends. (i.e. for ever, since there were no Greek Kalends.)

(g) A PUN is a play on two different meanings of the same word, or on the meanings of words resembling one another in sound.

e.g. All I live by is with the awl.
Is life worth living? That depends on the liver.

(h) EUPHEMISM consists in softening some unpleasant fact by expressing it in pleasant terms.

e.g. Here lies the body of Henry Stokes who fell asleep on July 23rd, 1862.
You cannot believe all he says; he has a vivid imagination.

(j) HYPERBOLE is poetic or literary exaggeration, not for the purpose of deceiving anyone, but to heighten the effect.

e.g. A cry that shivered to the tingling stars.
I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers

Could not with all their quantity of love
Make up the sum.—(Hamlet.)

(k) LITOTES is the converse of Hyperbole. It expresses an opinion by denying its opposite.

e.g. I am a citizen of no mean city.
This tart is not at all bad.
He is no fool.

3. (a) METONYMY means literally "a change of name," and is the representation of an object by the name of some other object connected with it.

e.g. He owes allegiance to the crown. (i.e. the king.)
The pen (i.e. the writer) is mightier than the sword (i.e. the soldier.)
He is studying Shakespeare. (i.e. the works of Shakespeare.)

(b) SYNECDOCHE closely resembles Metonymy. In it, the part is put for the whole, or the particular for the general.

e.g. All *hands* on deck!
No useless coffin enclosed his *breast.*
She was a maid of fourteen *summers.*
Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

(c) TRANSFERRED EPITHET is a figure in which the epithet, usually an adjective, qualifies a word to which it does not properly belong. It is used mainly in poetry.

e.g. The passengers watched the fearful billows break against the ship's side. (It was the passengers who were full of fear, not the billows.)

4. (a) INTERROGATION, or RHETORICAL QUESTION, is the use of a question not requiring an answer.

e.g. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?
Can the leopard change his spots, or the Ethiopian his skin?

(b) APOSTROPHE is the addressing of an inanimate object, or an absent or deceased person.

e.g. Milton! thou shoulds't be living at this hour.
Bright star! Would I were steadfast as thou art.

(c) REPETITION is a method of emphasising a point by saying it more than once.

e.g. Half a league, half a league, half a league onwards.
There is nothing I would more willingly part withal, except my life, except my life, except my life.

(d) CLIMAX is the arranging of a series of statements in order of ascendancy, the most important coming last.

e.g. I came, I saw, I conquered.

What a piece of work is man! How infinite in faculties! In form and motion how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a god!

ANTI-CLIMAX or BATHOS consists in making the last of the series of statements much less important than the preceding ones. It must only be used if a humorous effect is intended.

e.g. And here great Anna, whom three realms obey,
Doth sometimes counsel take, and sometimes tea.
—(Pope.)

He lost his wife, his children, and his purse.

5. (a) ALLITERATION is the repetition of the same initial consonant.

e.g. The long light shakes across the lake.
—(Tennyson.)
The furrow followed free.—(Coleridge.)

(b) ASSONANCE is the repetition of the same vowel sound. It is found very frequently in old English poetry, and there is a return to its use in very modern verse.

e.g. Green as a dream and deep as death.
—(Rupert Brooke.)
He stroke the Pagan with his steely brand
So sore that to his saddle-bow thereby
He bowed low and so a while did lie.—(Spenser.)

(c) ONOMATOPOEIA is a close connection between sound and meaning.

e.g. The mooing of cows.
The clucking of fowls.
The murmuring of innumerable bees.
—(Tennyson.)

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn yard.—(Alfred Noyes.)

EXERCISES

Exercise 1

State and explain the figures of speech in the following:—(Some may contain more than one).

(a) For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

(b) There, strung like white stars, the pearls still are.

(c) The fair breeze blew the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free:
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

(d) As he was standing in the entrance hall of the Haymarket Theatre after a performance, Sir William Gilbert was mistaken for an attendant by a man whose appearance did not appeal to him.
Said the man: "Call me a cab."
Certainly, replied Gilbert; "you're a four-wheeler."
"How dare you? What do you mean?"
"Well, you asked me to call you a cab, and I couldn't call you 'hansom'."

(e) Like hedgehogs which lie tumbling in my bare-foot way.

(f) On the horizon, we saw a fleet of fifty sail.

(g) When you are extremely tall, it is not all rapture to sit for hours with your length huddled beneath you like an idol of Buddha.

(h) He stole £50 and is now His Majesty's Guest for six months.

(i) Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead.
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
to o'er top Pelion or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

(j) I like a smuggler; he is the only honest thief.

(k) For very young he seemed, tenderly reared,
Like some young cypress, tall and dark and straight.
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf
By midnight to a bubbling fountain's sound.
So slender Sohrab seemed, so softly reared.

(l) It is true that what this book offers is very tough meat, and much spade-work will be needed.

(m) The unemployed are the human spare parts of the economic machine.

(n) Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing badly.

(o) A wise son maketh a glad father, but an erring son is the despair of his mother.

(p) Obedience is freedom from the intolerable burden of thought.

(q) With Time's injurious hand, I am now crushed and o'erworn.

(r) O death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?

(s) Fishing is the occasion of amazing fabrications.

(t) She was not discarding, which is confusion, flight, abandonment; she was storing, which is resolve, resistance, husbandry of power.

(u) The long line of lorries stood in the lamp-lit lane.

(v) There is tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honour for his valour, and death for his ambition.

(w) Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more.

(x) He that kills me some six or seven dozen Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands and says to his wife: "Fie upon this quiet life."

(y) If you consider, gentlemen of the jury, that the accused was on the roof of the house for the purpose of enjoying the midnight breeze, and by pure accident happened to have about him the necessary tools of a housebreaker, with no dishonest intention of employing them, you will, of course, acquit him.

(z) It is quite impossible to say whether this thing really happened. It depends entirely on the word of R. M. Harringay who is an artist.

EXERCISE 2

(a) Make antithetical sentences from the following pairs of ideas:

peaceful evening	— stormy night.
man of thought	— man of action.
cowards	— the valiant.
steady glow	— flickering gleam.
the quiet of the country	— the clamour of the town.
squandering his substance	— feathering his nest.

(b) Write sentences rising to a climax on the following themes:—

a person growing more and more frightened.
an audience becoming bored.
a crowd growing angry.
a child growing more and more excited.
a class becoming unruly.

(c) Make the following sentences more forceful by the use of hyperbole:—

The noise could be heard for some distance.
He has done a deed which will win fame.
Please give us a drink; we are very thirsty.
Many people have heard of Dickens.
There were many dead on the battlefield.

(d) Make metaphor to express the following ideas:—

He took risks but never seemed to get into any difficulties.
He said this just before leaving the room and closing the door behind him.
He had now made a decision from which there was no turning back.
She did her jobs in the wrong order.
She has not had a very easy life.
He worked late at night and rose early in the morning.
He has decided not to be lazy any more.

Chapter VIII

COMPOSITION

CLEAR PICTURES

Words are the materials of the writer, and he must learn to choose them well and to know their uses, as every other craftsman must know his materials. When we are sure of our choice of the right word and phrase, we must go on to the right way to incorporate it into our composition, so that we can build up the structure we want, and obtain the desired effect.

Words should, if they are descriptive, suggest pictures. The mind of the writer should therefore be stored with little film-strips, bringing back to his memory the details of the things he has seen, and the order in which he has seen them. He then transcribes these pictures into words, which, when they are read, will in their turn imprint the details on the mind of the reader.

To write well, one must be a good observer. One must notice the order in which incidents occur, and the order in which thoughts and conclusions impress themselves on the mind. Here are some examples from great writers of the pictorial effect of good observation and reproduction.

(a) Coleridge, in "The Ancient Mariner" wishes to contrast the speed of the fall of darkness in the tropics with the slow and gradual twilight of the north. He does so in these words:—

> "The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out,
> At one stride comes the dark."

(b) Dickens is one of the best writers for vividness and clarity in his word pictures. The following picture of a north of England manufacturing town comes from "Pickwick Papers."

> "The streets were thronged with working people. The hum of labour resounded from every house. Lights gleamed from the long casement windows in the attic storeys, and the whirl of wheels and noise of machinery shook the trembling walls. The fires whose lurid, sullen light had been visible for miles, blazed fiercely up in the great works and factories of the town. The din of hammers, the rushing of steam, and the dead, heavy clanking of engines was the harsh music which arose from every quarter."

Notice how the writer reproduces both the sound and the appearance of the scene he describes.

(c) Our third extract is from "Travels with a Donkey" by R. L. Stevenson. It is an excellent example of vividness of detail:

> "I wakened thirsty. My tin was standing by me half full of water. I emptied it at a draught; and feeling broad awake after this internal cold aspersion, sat upright to make a cigarette. The stars were clear, coloured and jewel-like, but not frosty. A faint silvery vapour stood for the Milky Way. All around me the black fir-points stood upright and stock-still. By the whiteness of the pack saddle, I could see Modestine walking round and round at the length of her tether; I could hear her steadily munching at the sward; but there was not another sound, save the indescribable quiet talk of the runnel over the stones. I lay lazily smoking and studying the colour of the sky, as we call the void of space, from where it showed a glossy blue-black between the stars. As if to be more like a pedlar, I wear a silver ring. This I could see faintly shining as I raised or lowered the cigarette; and at each whiff the inside of my hand was illuminated, and became for a second the highest light in the landscape.

EXERCISES

1. Write a short description of the approach of a liner from the horizon to the quay-side where you are standing. Pay particular attention to the order in which the details became visible to you.
2. Describe the approach of an unusual person down a long street or road.
3. Describe the sights and sounds of a busy street.
4. Give an account of a procession of pilgrims arriving at a shrine.

In the preceding paragraph, it has been emphasised that the writer must have a clear picture in his own mind of whatever he wishes to convey to his reader. Now we will consider the methods we must use to make the word picture as clear to the reader as it is to the writer. First, do not use words which have no precise meaning. In conversation, we use such words as *nice*, *pretty*, *wonderful*, *marvellous*, *sweet*, *good*, *bad*,

in so many senses that these words have ceased to mean anything at all. "A nice day" for instance, cannot possibly have the same characteristics as "a nice dinner" or "a nice book."

You had practice in Chapter IV of choosing the exact word to fit your meaning. Now you must be careful to take sufficient trouble to insure against vagueness. The sentence: "His behaviour was dreadful" gives only a faint suggestion of what he did. If you write:

> "He strode into the office without removing his hat and immediately took possession of my telephone without asking my permission"

you have a picture of one sort of "dreadful behaviour" but if you write:

> "He was standing in the middle of the street armed with stones and bottles which he hurled at anyone who approached, while a continuous stream of abuse against 'dirty capitalists' poured from his mouth"

you have a description of dreadful of a very different kind. The first vague phrase covers either.

There is a story that a journalist was once sent to write a report of a flower show. When he returned to the office, he found he had mistaken his instructions, and should have gone to a wedding. "Never mind," he said, "The account will do just as well for either!"

Obviously he had not bothered to be exact!

EXERCISES

1. Expand the following vague phrases into two or three lines giving clear-cut descriptions:—
   (a) There was a magnificent view.
   (b) Our headmaster is jolly nice.
   (c) It was an animated scene.
   (d) We had awful weather.
2. Use each of these *exact* adjectives in one only of the following sentences to replace the *vague* adjectives used: untuneful, slow, unmannerly, sunny, considerate, deep, vicious, exhilarating.
   (a) It was nice of you to lend him your book.
   (b) His violin playing was awful.
   (c) It was a nice day yesterday.
   (d) We had a nice swim.

(e) His behaviour was awful.
(f) I am bad at learning mathemathics.
(g) The knife thrust gave him a nasty wound.
(h) That man has a nasty temper.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

A sentence is the expression of a complete thought. It must not leave the reader unsure of what it wishes to convey, but neither must it attempt to convey more than one thought. Suppose we have the three words,

Car, House, Road.

We can weld them into one sentence in this way:

The car was standing outside a house a little way down the road. But if we write:— *The car was a very powerful one. The house belongs to my uncle. This is the road to Delhi.* Three sentences have been formed because there are three separate thoughts expressed.

Inexperienced writers often try to connect unrelated thoughts by *and* and *but*. The absurdity of this can be seen in an exaggeratedly unrelated couple of thoughts like this:—

She has black hair and an aunt in Kashmir.

He has a wooden leg but is a lover of animals.

But "Though he has a wooden leg, he is a lover of the countryside" is not absurd, because it suggests that he makes efforts to go into the country-side in spite of his wooden leg.

EXERCISES

1. Add a few more words to those given in order to make one complete thought:—

boat	bridge	
tiger	cage	
tiger	coat	
beggar	street	bowl
beggar	spy	disguise
Monsoon	damages	hut
asleep	fire	

2. In each of these examples, two sentences have been written as one. Divide them at the point, and put in the necessary punctuation.
   (a) They marched up and down and round and round with indefatigable enthusiasm every time they encountered the national flag the whole array saluted.

(b) Our rotten old half-deck was two feet under water the whole time every stitch of bedding and clothing we possessed was wet through.
(c) Three months went by the bear cub was now as strong as a full-grown man.
(d) When the cart was loaded up I was sent off in charge of the old white horse Sam he was the first horse I had ever driven and very proud I was of him.

3. In the following exercise, sometimes one sentence has been written as two and sometimes as one. Only one is correct. Rewrite the incorrect ones correctly.
(a) Fortune seemed to favour him always when hardest pressed for food he found something to kill.
(b) In the midst of this pleasant progress which I made from place to place. I was arrested by an officer who had a warrant against me.
(c) The thing has gone so far that at any trade-union meeting today, you would not expect to hear a word implying that the work its members do is anything but a mere cause of weariness only made endurable by pay.
(d) He feared the beating. He knew to be waiting for him.
(e) Hereward was silent his brain was still whirling from the adventures of the day.

4. What is wrong in the following sentences?
(a) Henry VIII was very handsome as a young man, and was responsible for the dissolution of the monasteries.
(b) He was a member of a very big family and was also an excellent swimmer.
(c) The beauty of the forests has inspired many a writer and you can also get valuable timber from them.
(d) I was married in Bombay which has one of the finest harbours in the world.

LOOSE AND PERIODIC SENTENCES.

Sentences of all lengths can be arranged to form *Loose* and *Periodic* sentence constructions.

(a) In a *loose* sentence, the main subject and predicate come first, and all the qualifying phrases and clauses are

loosely tacked on afterwards. This is the type of sentence most often used in ordinary conversation.

e.g. The old woman stood in the doorway, her white head framed in the darkness of the dim hall behind her.

Pisanio disclosed to Imogen at the end of the journey the cruel order he had received, for, though faithful to Posthumus, he was not faithful to serve him in an evil deed.

Such sentences must not be allowed to run on indefinitely. As the crisis, or vital point, of the sentence is in the first few words, everything that follows detracts from the force of the statement.

e.g. It is a beautiful poem, suggesting the cool shade of the summer woods where the leaves hardly move in the faint breeze which brings the scent of roses from the nearby gardens in which cottagers are resting from the toil of the day.

Here one keeps expecting a full stop. One might come after "woods," "breeze," "roses," "gardens," or "resting." But still the sentence goes on, until the reader has forgotten it dealt with a poem at all.

Here is an even more top-heavy example:

"Stand and deliver," rapped out the highwayman, standing at the cross-roads with pistols in both hands, and wearing a large black cocked hat with a feather, and a flowing black cloak over a magnificent doublet of blue velvet slashed with silver, matching the silver buckles on his fine leather shoes.

In this sentence, the crisis, or vital point, is in the first line, but by the time the reader has ploughed through all that follows, he has probably forgotten what the point was.

(b) In a *Periodic* sentence, the crisis is kept to the end. Here are loose sentences from (a) transformed into periodic sentences.

e.g. In the doorway, her white hair framed against the darkness of the dim hall behind her, stood the old woman.

At the end of the journey, Pisanio, who, though faithful to Posthumus, was not faithful to serve him in an evil deed, disclosed to Imogen the cruel order he had received.

It will be seen that periodic sentences are useful for heigh-

tening dramatic effect, and for putting the reader into the right mood to receive a startling piece of information. Note how much more effective is (b) than (a) in the following:

(a) The phantom knight was there in the garden.

(b) There in the garden was the phantom knight.

But writers must use periodic sentences sparingly. Try to write a whole paragraph of periodic sentences, and you will see how all the effect is lost.

MIXED SENTENCES

Some sentences can be a mixture of loose and periodic; i.e., the crisis is in the middle with qualifying details both before and after.

e.g. Humming as he went, and flicking the bushes with his walking stick, he walked briskly along, obviously enjoying the fresh morning air.

Notice that this sentence can be transformed into either a loose or a periodic sentence, merely by rearranging the phrases.
Loose. He walked briskly along humming as he went, flicking the bushes by the roadside and obviously enjoying the fresh morning air.
Periodic. Humming as he went, flicking the bushes by the roadside with his walking stick and obviously enjoying the fresh morning air, he walked briskly along.

BALANCED SENTENCES

A fourth kind of sentence is the balanced sentence which has two parts of equal importance.

e.g. A fool always wants to shorten space and time: a wise man wants to lengthen both.

EXERCISES

In the following sentences, distinguish between loose, periodic, mixed, and balanced. Justify your answers.

(i) The jester was not partaking of the repast, but was chatting with Simon, the chief cook, a good-humoured personage, who was blessed with a spouse called Deborah, as fond of good cheer, and as fat and good-humoured as himself.

(ii) On seeing Mabel, Will, with an air of mock gallantry, advanced towards her.

(iii) When he turned a sharp bend in the road, a stately procession met him.

(iv) To the best archer a prize was to be awarded, being a bugle horn mounted with silver.
(v) If you win the prize, I will add to it an award of my own, which I shall rejoice to present to you.
(vi) Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and Adversity is not without comforts and hopes.
(vii) If you turn your steps to the great church which was built in memory of St. Francis, you will find his whole life pictured for you on the walls.
(viii) He built an observatory from which to study the heavens.
(ix) It was through their talk to a fellow prisoner that they heard news of Ralph who had been lost for so long.
(x) Overt and apparent virtues bring forth praise; but there be secret and hidden virtues that bring forth fortune.

THE PARAGRAPH

Just as a sentence must have unity of thought, a paragraph must have unity of subject matter or topic. Its sentences must follow one another logically, the idea in each one arising naturally from some thought suggested by the one before. Finally, it must have unity of treatment and atmosphere. Do not begin in one style and switch over to another half way through.

One of the first few sentences of each paragraph should give an indication of the *topic* or subject matter on which the paragraph is written. This sentence is known as the *topic sentence.*

In the following paragraphs, the topic sentence is in italics.

"*He was rather a precocious little boy.* He learned to talk at an abnormally early age, and he was so sane and "old-fashioned" as people say, that he was permitted an amount of initiative that most children scarcely attain by seven or eight. His mother died when he was two, and he was under the less vigilant and authoritative care of a nursery governess. His father was a stern, preoccupied lawyer who gave him little attention, and expected great things of him. For all his brightness, he found life grey and dull."

—(H. G. Wells, "The door in the wall.")

The first sentence is the topic setence, introducing the subject matter of the paragraph. The rest of the paragraph

gives fuller details about this statement, and the last sentence sums up the atmosphere of the whole.

"On February 4th, 1779, the wanderers left the island. On February 11th, they were driven back to it by bad weather. *Almost at once there was trouble.* Very few of the natives showed themselves; there were no visitors to the ships, and on shore the inhabitants were no longer friendly. There were more thefts, and when these were punished, stones were thrown, and the sailors who came on shore were attacked."

—(Mrs. Laurence Binyon, "Life of Captain Cook.")

Never before in my life had I seen such clouds. They rose, as it were, out of the sea in majestic mountain ranges. They were outlined in silhouettes of white fire against the moon. They presented themselves as caricatures, not only of Hamlet's weasel, camel, and whale, but also of helmeted crusaders and contemporary politicians. They thrust peak after peak of dazzling white into the deep azure of the sky. They hung, purplish and sinister, on the edge of the horizon. They accumulated, like piled fleeces, and shedded out like thin gauze veils. They drifted simultaneously — so at all events it seemed — before and against the wind at different levels. And they interfered singularly little with the sunshine."

—(Val Gielgud, "One Year of Grace.")

EXERCISES

1. Write paragraphs round the topic sentences given below:—
   (a) It was a monotonous, dreary landscape.
   (b) The old man was obviously not a pleasant character.
   (c) I have never seen so delightful a garden.
   (d) It was the sort of winter weather which is all the more delightful because it is so unexpected.
   (When you have done this one, you can compare your effort with that of Joseph Conrad in "YOUTH," King's Treasury edition, page 19.)
2. Divide the following story into paragraphs:—

An old farmer called his three idle sons around him when on his death-bed, to impart to them an important secret. "My sons," said he, "a great treasure lies hid in the estate which I am about to leave you." The old man gasped. "Where is it hid?" exclaimed the sons in one breath. "I am about to tell you," said

the old man. "You will have to dig for it —" But his breath failed him before he could impart the weighty secret; and he died. Forthwith the sons set to work with spade and mattock upon the long-neglected fields. In time they had turned over every clod of earth on the estate. They discovered no treasure; but, they learnt to work. Next year the fields were sown as usual, and when the sons gathered in the harvest, the yield was prodigious as a result of the thorough tilling they had given the fields in their search for treasure. Then it was that they discovered the treasure concealed in the estate, of which their wise old father had warned them.

THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE PARAGRAPH

If a paragraph is descriptive, it should have *unity of atmosphere.* Study the following paragraphs and notice how the writer sustains the same atmosphere throughout.

(a) The universal state made the eyes ache. Towards the distant blue of the Italian coast, indeed, it was a little relieved by light clouds of mist, slowly rising from the evaporation of the sea, but it softened nowhere else. Far away the staring roads, deep in dust, stared from the hillside, stared from the hollow, stared from the interminable plain. Far away, the dusty vines overhanging wayside cottages, and the monotonous wayside avenues of parched trees without shade, drooped beneath the stare of earth and sky. So did the horses with drowsy bells in long files of carts, creeping slowly towards the interior; so did their recumbent drivers. When they were awake, which rarely happened; so did the exhausted labourers in the fields. Everything that lived or grew was oppressed by the glare; except the lizard passing swiftly over rough stone walls, and the cicala, chirping his hot, dry chirp, like a rattle. The very dust was scorched brown, and something quivered in the atmosphere as if the air itself were panting.

— (Charles Dickens, "Little Dorrit.")

Dickens has created his atmosphere here by deliberately keeping to the same type of vocabulary. He wishes to suggest monotony, and does so by a repetition of the word "stare," and by a careful choice of words which give an impression of sameness: "interminable," "monotonous," "recumbent," "exhausted," "droop," "rattle," "scorch," "drowsy," "glare," "panting."

(b) When you see a rich wilderness of wood in decent England, it is like enough that you will see it with some soft regrets. The puzzled old woman at the lodge can give small account of "the family." She thinks it is "Italy" that has made the whole circle of her world so gloomy and sad. You avoid the house in lively dread of a lone housekeeper, but you make your way on by the stables. You remember that gable with all its neatly nailed trophies of fitches and hawks and owls, now slowly falling to pieces; you remember that stable, and that — but the doors are all fastened that used to be standing ajar, the paint of things painted is blistered and cracked — grass grows in the yard, just there, in October mornings, the keeper would wait with the dogs and the guns; no keeper now. You hurry away and gain the small wicket that used to open to the touch of a lightsome hand — it is fastened with a padlock (the only new-looking thing), and is stained with thick, green damp; you climb it, and bury yourself in the deep shade, and strive but lazily with the tangling briars, and stop for long minutes to judge and determine whether you will creep beneath the long boughs and make them your archway, or whether perhaps you will lift your heel and tread them down under foot. Long doubt, and scarcely to be ended till you wake from the memory of those days when the path was clear, and chase that phantom of a muslin sleeve that once weighed warm upon your arm.

—(A. W. Kinglake, "Eothen.")

The atmosphere here is one of sadness and regret.

The vocabulary does not aim at giving a single impression, as in the Dickens extract, but the style gives a series of contrasts between what used to be in the happy past, and what is now in the neglected present. A general air of melancholy pervades the paragraph.

(c) The sea was a wonderful, magnificent sight. The rollers, high as our foreyard and stretching north and south as far as the eye could reach, were titanic in their grandeur. (Under the lash of the hurricane squalls the seas turned to fields of snow just streaked with ribbons of dull green. There no longer seemed

> to be any waves, the whole surface of the sea assumed constantly-changing inclines and the barque's plunges grew longer and steadier through her very insignificance compared to those undulating mountains of water. It was impossible to estimate their height, but fifty feet would certainly be no exaggeration. As the barque slid down some foam-topped, league-long slope, the water ahead rose higher than the foreyard. Next moment her bows were pointing skyward and her stern fell into the trough, with a mighty wall of water rising up behind her. It is a nerve-shaking sight to look astern and see a hissing roller, as steep as the side of a house and as high, rushing towards the ship. Just as it seems it must fall with a cataclysmic crash and overwhelm her, her stern rises swiftly to it, and the foaming crest under her counter and surges for'ard, balancing the barque like a cork on its crest.
>
> —(Rex Clements, "Gipsy of the Home.")

This is a paragraph of violent movement — very different from the first two which were lazy or quiet in character. Nearly every sentence here has a word denoting swift change of position, "constantly changing inclines," "undulating mountains," "slid down," "rose higher," "pointing skyward," "steep as the side of a house," "cataclysmic crash."

EXERCISES

Write paragraphs giving an atmosphere of:—

(a) Fear.
(b) Quiet peace.
(c) Pleasurable excitement.
(d) Noisy manual labour by many people.

THE ESSAY

The different types of essay can be divided into classes as follows:—

(1) Description.
(2) Narration.
(3) Reflection.
(4) Exposition.
(5) Argument.

All five types should be carefully planned at first, until

the writer has attained the habit of planning subconsciously, when a written plan will be no longer necessary. The basic plan is the same for all types of essay. It is:—

(a) Introduction.
(b) Body of essay.
(c) Conclusion.

The *Introduction* should be a short paragraph presenting the subject matter to the reader. It bears the same relation to the whole essay as the topic sentence to the paragraph. Here are some introductions to essays by modern writers:—

(1) Description. THE FACE OF ENGLAND
by C. E. M. JOAD.

The ravages, of course began long before the war. The invention of the internal combustion engine may be regarded with justice as the greatest single disaster in the history of mankind. Not only has it destroyed the security of England and made wholesale death and mutilation familiar things; it has also destroyed the beauty of England, killed quiet, and with quiet, dignity.

Here the writer plunges straight into his subject, almost suggesting by the parenthesis "of course" in the first sentence, that he has been talking for some time and is just continuing. This familiar style of opening is much more common in modern writing than the long, formal introductions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

(2) Narration. THE TEMPTATION OF HARRINGAY
by H. G. WELLS.

It is quite impossible to say whether this thing really happened. It depends entirely on the word of R. M. Harringay, who is an artist.

In this introduction, the author is preparing the reader for the incredible events which are to be the substance of the story. He is establishing the atmosphere. Notice the neatness of the innuendo in the second sentence.

(3) Reflection. THE PLAYER AND HIS ART
by SIR JOHN MARTIN HARVEY.

The art I follow is still something of a mystery to me, and therein lies perhaps much of its extraordinary fascination. Why should one, in the performance of a certain role suddenly and involuntarily, without rehearsal, without premeditation, make a movement, utter a sound, or use a modulation, which, though

unprepared, yet belongs essentially to the character one is impersonating at that moment? Whence come these involuntary flashes of expression, incidental to the feeling or environment of the moment?

In this introduction, the writer sets out some of the questions which come to his mind when he reflects upon his art. He will discuss these questions during the body of the essay.

(4) Exposition. RESHAPING PLANTS AND ANIMALS
by J. B. S. HALDANE.

We live in a very artificial world, even in peace-time. We are apt to think that this has only been so in the last few hundred years since machines took over a lot of work which used to be done by men or animals. But our domesticated animals and plants are not products of nature, but human products. A Jersey cow is as artificial as a cream-separator, a bull-dog is no more natural than a machine-gun, a wheat plant is as much a human product as a loaf of bread. There are no wild animals or plants with their special qualities; and there never were.

The topic sentence of this paragraph is really the last. It expresses the same idea as the first sentence, but whereas sentence one is a vague generalisation, the final sentence is a startling contradiction of what most people believe. The body of the essay will set out the reasons for this assertion.

(5) Argument.

THOUGHTS ON PEACE IN AN AIR RAID
by VIRGINIA WOOLF.

The Germans were over this house last night and the night before that. Here they are again. It is a queer experience, lying in the dark and listening to the zoom of a hornet which may at any moment sting you to death. It is a sound that interrupts cool and consecutive thinking about peace. Yet it is a sound — far more than prayers or anthems — that should compel one to think about peace. Unless we can think peace into existence, we — not this one body in this one bed, but millions of bodies yet to be born — will lie in the same darkness and hear the same death rattle overhead. Let us think what we can do to create the only efficient air-raid shelter while the guns on the hill go pop-pop-pop and the search-lights finger the clouds, and now and then, sometimes close at hand, sometimes far away, a bomb drops.

Here again the writer sets the atmosphere of what is to follow.

She gives a physical setting which is one of high, nervour tension, and she is deliberately controversial as she wishes to put a new point of view and uphold it against supporters of the opposite standpoint.

THE CONCLUSION

After planning his *Introduction*, the writer should think out his *Conclusion*. He must know in what direction his thoughts are going. The conclusion is the goal of his thoughts, and so must be kept in sight throughout. Inexperienced writers who fail to plan their conclusions before beginning on the body of the essay are apt to bring in trains of thoughts and examples which are irrelevant, which do not advance the argument towards its logical conclusion, or the story to its climax.

Here are the conclusions of the essays, the introductions of which are given above. In four of the five, it would be fairly simple for you to tell what the body of the essay is to be, when you have read both introduction and conclusion. The exception is, of course, the Narration, where the conclusion is merely as the dying hum of the engine when the petrol has been switched off.

1. *Description.*

Conclusion of "The Face of England" by C. E. M. Joad.

Now I am anxious to beat the Nazis, but I am not anxious to beat the Nazis in order to establish "Brave New World." Yet such, I am convinced, will be our fate unless some provision is made for the re-creation and refreshment of man's spirit in intercourse with natural beauty as an alternative to the standardised, mass-produced, creation-saving amusements with which it will pay a new race of entrepreneurs to tap the pockets and debauch the leisure of the economically comfortable and enormously leisured proletariat whom the Socialist Utopia of the future will provide. It is in these more ultimate social considerations that the importance of preserving the countryside lies. But it will not be preserved, unless we are prepared to plan its preservation and to plan it now.

2. *Narration.*

Conclusion of "The Temptation of Harringay,"
by H. G. Wells.

"This is Harringay's story, not mine. He supports it by a small canvas (24 by 20) enamelled a pale green, and by violent

asservations. It is also true that he has never produced a masterpiece, and in the opinion of his intimate friends, probably never will."

3. *Reflection.*

Conclusion of "The Player and His Art," by Sir John Martin Harvey.

"These few instances I have recalled are the 'touches of nature' which indeed 'make the whole world kin'. These are messages from his own soul, which a great artist sends forth to others, for the beautifying of this work-a-day world".

4. *Exposition.*

Conclusion of "Reshaping Plants and Animals" by J. B. S. Haldane.

"I want to leave you with the conviction that the animal or plant breeder is a truly creative man or woman. I am thinking particularly of men like Keens; the Isleworth market-gardener who made the first modern strawberry in 1806 by crossing a big purple species from Chile with the small red European species. Someone will say that breeders merely pick out what they want from the materials provided by Nature. You might as well say that a sculptor merely chipped away marble from a block, and the statue was there all the time. I want you to be proud of the great achievements of our breeders in the past, proud that Denmark was colonised by Middle White pigs from England which used to provide so much of our bacon, proud that English rams are being used to improve wool production on the giant Soviet sheep farms. And I want you to see that when the war is over, British men and women will have the opportunity to carry on their great traditions by making still more beautiful and useful animals and plants."

5. *Argument.*

Conclusion of "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid" by Virginia Woolf.

"At last all the guns have stopped firing. All the search-lights have been extinguished. The natural darkness of a summer's night returns. The innocent sounds of the country are heard again. An apple thuds to the ground. And owl hoots, winging its way from tree to tree. And some half-forgotten words of an English writer come to mind: 'The huntsmen are up in America.....' Let us send these frag-

mentary notes to the huntsmen who are up in America, to the men and women whose sleep has not yet been broken by machine-gun fire, in the belief that they will re-think them generously and charitably, perhaps shape them into something serviceable. And now, in the shadowed half of the world, to sleep."

THE BODY OF THE ESSAY

1. Descriptive

The aim of a descriptive essay is to create a picture in the mind of the reader. Descriptive essays are usually static, that is to say they deal with something that remains in the same position or condition throughout the essay. Unity of thought is gained by proceeding in an orderly manner from one detail to an adjoining or connected one until the whole area has been covered.

For example, if you are describing the appearance of a giant or a witch in a fairy tale, begin with the head and work downwards, or with the feet and work upwards, but do not pass from one extremity to another and back again haphazardly.

Be precise and colourful. Remember all you have learnt about paragraph writing, and make each of your paragraphs follow naturally on the preceding one.

2. Narrative

All the work of a narrative essay is done in the body. The introduction and conclusion are usually mere appendages. The vital point about narration is that it should *move*. Each sentence should bring the story nearer to its climax. The best advice that I can give you about writing stories is that of the king in "Alice in Wonderland" to the White Rabbit: "Begin at the beginning, go on till you come to the end, then stop."

Detail.

You must be very careful to put into the story exactly the right amount of detail. Too much would clog the movement, not enough would make the story unintelligible. In the story of Red Riding Hood, for instance, it is essential to say that the Grandmother is ill, for that is the *raison d'etre* of the story of Red Riding Hood's journey through the wood; but it is quite unnecessary to say from what disease she is suffering, how long she has been

ill, how she is, or how many other children she has besides Red Riding Hood's mother!

Characters.

In a short story, keep down the number of characters as much as possible. All the interest should be centred on the few who are vital to the story. Of these few, one should be the angle character, that is, the story should be told from his point of view, and only those facts which he could be expected to know must be included in the narrative.

All the characters must behave consistently: e.g., if your plot depends on the miserly nature of the chief character, see that he is not made to be suddenly generous for no reason.

Working out the plot.

The body of a story should have three stages:—
(1) The setting out of the situation,
(2) the complication of the situation
(3) the unravelling of the complication (or solution)

In Red Riding Hood, these three parts are as follows:—
(1) The sick grandmother, and the child's mission to the house with a basket of food.
(2) The appearance of the wolf, and his plot to eat both grandmother and child.
(3) The killing of the wolf.

Local colour.

See that your details are correct for the setting you have chosen. For example, do not make your hero light a cigarette in a coal mine!

Some hints on narrative style.

(1) Be particular, not vague. Not "A man lived in a certain town" but "Mr. Shah lived on the third floor of a tall house near the cloth market."
(2) Use the concrete, not the abstract.
(3) Use the active rather than the passive.
(4) Use direct speech.

3. REFLECTION

When writing your reflections on any subject, you must always bear in mind the conclusions which you are drawing from those reflections. You must, in other words, have your

goal always in view. Leave out thoughts which do not advance you towards this goal, however attractive they may seem.

4. Exposition

The essential of an expository essay is to know your subject thoroughly. It is useless, for example, to set out to write an essay on "Irrigation in the Punjab" unless you have studied the subject. This is the most technical type of essay, and should only be attempted by the expert.

5. Argument

In an argumentative essay, you must state the case for the side you refute as well as that which you uphold. There are two methods of approach: one is to state the case of the opposite side as fully as possible, and then take item by item and show how your side is better in every respect! The other is to take the items one by one, and refute each separately. In either method, you must lead up to the conclusion which summarises your opinion.

It is possible to write this type of essay in the form of a dialogue between two or more people, each putting one point of view.

ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

CHAPTER I.

1. Take the horse out of the cart, put him in the stable and feed him, and I will pay you tomorrow morning.
2. Go and try to teach your grandmother to suck eggs.
3. It is unfair that many should be starving while a few rich people enjoy luxury. This spoils the democracy of which we are so proud.
4. It has been impossible to move people from one district to another as there is not enough transport.
5. You may take a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink.
6. Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

CHAPTER IV.

EXERCISE 1

a. flash
b. glare
c. gleam
d. sparkle
e. blaze
f. flicker
g. beam
h. shimmered
i. glint
j. glittered
k. twinkled
l. flared
m. glistened
n. glimmer
o. glow

EXERCISE 2

a. The soft music was suddenly interrupted by a great blare from the trumpets.
b. The watchers were horrified by the shrieks which came from the burning building.
c. The rumble of the train going through the tunnel stopped all conversation.
d. They could hear the thunder of the guns across the bay.
e. A roll of drums announced the opening of the display.
f. We heard the jangle of many different types of bells all struck together.
g. The peal of eight bells sounded rhythmically over the valley.
h. As she walked, there was a jingle of the many bracelets round her ankles.
i. The heavy parcel fell with a dull thud.
j. There was a clatter of dishes, giving the welcome indication that a meal was being prepared.
k. He heard the clink of the rupee as it fell into the tin box.
l. His heavy boots crunched on the gravel as he walked.
m. They heard an owl hoot from the forest.
n. The stone fell into the lake with a loud splash.
o. A flock of small birds was twittering among the trees.
p. The roar of the distant traffic came to my ears as I opened the window.
q. The children were chattering happily as they dressed.
r. A low murmur of voices came from the next room.

s. They seemed to be reciting some lesson they had learnt by heart, but I could distinguish nothing — only a drone came to my ears.
t. The little stream babbled over the stones.
u. The old man gave a chuckle in his beard when he heard the story.
v. I heard the chink of coins as he counted his money.
w. The blades of the reaping machine clacked round as it moved along.
x. His hammer clanged on the anvil.
y. Great gusts of wind blustered down the valley.

EXERCISE 3

a. The mariners were lured on to the rocks by the Sirens. The cheese is put there to entice the mouse into the trap. He defrauded the old man of all his money by pretending he could invest it profitably for him.

The card sharpers fleeced the young man of all the money he had on him.

You deceived me when you said you were going to a lecture.

The quack doctor cheated the poor woman by selling her coloured water as medicine.

Don't try to swindle me; the bottom of that basket of strawberries is full of stones.

He circumvented all his father's precautions, and escaped from the house.

He tried to ensnare me into a confession of guilt, but I was too wary for him.

Many people went to see the supposed ghost, but it was nothing but a hoax.

The brigand waylaid the travellers as they crossed the mountains.

The two friends had been playfellows when they were quite small, "This is my pal, Ganesh," said the schoolboy as he introduced his friend.

Dr. Tyabjee is dining with some of his colleagues tonight.

The plumber and his mate came to mend the leak in the pipe.

The burglar must have had some accomplice inside the house.

Mr. Smith is my business partner.

The old woman had been a faithful helpmate to her husband for forty years.

Old Mr. Robins is a crony of my grandfathers; they sit and talk together for hours.

He is no associate of mine; I don't like his methods.

Madame Curie and her husband were collaborators in the great work of discovering radium.

John was a friend and confidant of the prince.

Although the burglar was caught, he would not give away his confederate.

These two men are coadjutors in judging the competition.

c. The puppy was very docile and allowed itself to be trained to do all kinds of tricks.

The girls were subservient to their father in everything: they had no will of their own.

Uriah Heap, the cringing office clerk in Dickens' "David Copperfield" is a character we all dislike.

He has very pleasant manners: he is deferential to older people and gets on well with those of his own age.

d. The belief in immortality is the keystone of most religious creeds.

The knowledge that his father was still alive brought new hope to his heart.

I am drawing up my plans on the supposition that I shall inherit my father's fortune when I am twenty-one.

It is my opinion that the burglar was concealed in the house all the evening; but you may not agree with me.

"It's all his fancy that: he hasn't got no sorrow," said the Gryphon to Alice in Wonderland.

He had very strong convictions about the value of discipline, and brought up his family very strictly.

My grandmother has a prejudice against motorcars, and nothing will persuade her to travel in one.

e. He was a proud man on the day his son won the distinguished award.

This aristocratic family had always been known for

its haughty manner; its members expected everyone to give way before them.

She is so vain of her beauty that she cannot bear to be in a room with no mirrors in which she can admire herself.

The arrogant manner of the Prince made him disliked by all who had to deal with him.

Mrs. Robins may be a very estimable woman, but she is so overbearing, with her loud voice and bombastic manner, that I always feel cowed in her presence.

She was an imperious little girl even when a child: I have seen her sitting in a high chair ordering the servants about when she was only about six years of age.

f. The traveller was delighted to return home at last after many years abroad.

The ball, kicked from an acute angle, evaded the goal keeper, and entered the goal. (Literal)

His goal is to win a scholarship to the University. (Metaphorical)

After his death, his body was laid in its last resting-place in the village churchyard.

After travelling all day, he arrived at his destination at sunset.

There was such a storm that the ship had to put back into the harbour.

That quiet village was a haven of rest to him after the rush and tumult of his life in the city.

The liner will touch at the following ports: Marseilles, Port Said, Aden, Bombay, and Colombo.

There was a landing-place at the foot of a flight of stone steps, and a small boat was moored there.

As this is the terminus, the train can obviously go no farther.

There was a station a mile out of the village, but the important trains did not stop there.

g. The first thing to do if you think a crime has been committed is to inform the police.

I will acquaint my solicitors with any change in my address, so you can always communicate with me through them.

I may have mentioned your intention of buying a house to Mr. Banerjee, but I do not remember doing so.

In his speech, the retiring Headmaster expressed his appreciation of the kind remarks that had been made about him by the previous speaker.

My client has intimated his willingness to meet you next week.

Communicate. (See 2nd sentence.)

You did not notify me that the date of the meeting had been changed, so naturally I attended on the day arranged.

The estate agent promised to advise me if any suitable properties came on the market.

It was announced over the Radio that there was to be a meeting of Foreign Ministers in Paris.

The constable reported that he had seen flames coming from the window of the house.

The prisoner declared his innocence.

Since you have trusted me for so long, I will now enlighten you as to why I have been behaving in this manner.

EXERCISE 4

delay,	monotony,	decline,	nadir,	debit,
pain,	idle,	niggardliness,	differ,	guilty.

EXERCISE 5

(a)	scrutinised	(b)	sedentary
(c)	secretive, *or* reserved	(d)	hibernate
(e)	convalescents	(f)	admonitory
(g)	peremptory	(h)	ostentation
(j)	investiture	(k)	impostor

EXERCISE 6

(1) a feeling of enmity towards
(2) able to express oneself
(3) life without any luxury
(4) without consideration of others
(5) like a corpse
(6) agreement or submission
(7) left unused

(8) an unworthy use of something holy
(9) so worried as not to be responsible for one's actions
(10) the highest and best point of some quality
(11) lasting only a very short time
(12) very thin from hunger or illness
(13) silly and without point
(14) very particular
(15) liking to be in crowds
(16) unasked or uncalled for
(17) artistically ugly
(18) of many different kinds
(19) one who is apt to imagine himself ill
(20) to do with dramatic art
(21) (Literally) a breaker of images, one who does not respect tradition
(22) about to happen
(23) having no resources
(24) harmless
(25) to tear to strips
(26) weariness, lack of interest
(27) mournful
(28) generous
(29) folk lore concerning gods
(30) concerned with evil practices
(31) a rich man
(32) advanced in knowledge beyond one's years
(33) in brackets
(34) after one's decease
(35) rude laughter
(36) going downhill; opposite to progressive
(37) to repeat over and over
(38) almost circular (used of very fat people)
(39) no longer useful because of age
(40) circling round another, dependent
(41) left-handed; suggestive of evil
(42) one who walks in sleep
(43) to do with the earth
(44) quickly passing
(45) twisting
(46) able to do many things
(47) to absolve from blame
(48) greedy

(49) easily wounded
(50) a loud-voiced, bad-tempered woman
(51) the mid-point of the sun's course
(52) keen, hard-working

EXERCISE 7

1. (a) The speaker at the prize-giving made several allusions to the good work of the retiring headmaster.
   (b) He had a strange illusion that he saw the figure of his dead wife standing in the doorway.
2. (a) The book contains a comprehensive study of the geography of the Deccan.
   (b) His talk was clear and comprehensible to even the youngest listeners.
3. (a) To steal from a child is a most contemptible action.
   (b) He looked with a contemptuous smile at the feeble attempts of the beginners to play tennis.
4. (a) There has now been continuous rain for six days —it has not stopped for a moment.
   (b) The child's continual requests for a bicycle at last prevailed.
5. (a) It is hardly credible that he should be so ignorant as to believe that a bottle of liquid sold in the bazar could turn everything to gold.
   (b) He is so credulous that he would believe that a bottle of liquid sold in the bazar could turn everything to gold.
6. (a) He was always ready to give good counsel to those who asked for it.
   (b) The Council of Ministers is meeting today.
7. (a) You must do what is expedient, even though it may give you extra work.
   (b) His expeditious reply to the enquiry for estimates obtained for him the contract.
8. (a) A climb like this is most exhausting on a hot day.
   (b) He has made an exhaustive study of the habits of tropical fish.
9. (a) The librarian has kindly offered him every facility for study.
   (b) He wished the bride and bridegroom joy and felicity.

10. (a) A great welcome was given to the illustrious visitors.
    (b) Lantern slides illustrative of the lecture were shown.
11. (a) He was a member of the orchestra at the Imperial Court at Vienna.
    (b) "Give me that at once," she said in an imperious tone.
12. (a) He had an ingenious device for charging his batteries by a little windmill.
    (b) The young girl's ingenuous questions made us smile.
13. (a) The suggestions you have made are incompatible with honesty.
    (b) Mr. X's incomparable handling of his violin held the audience spell-bound.
14. (a) You had better intimate to the matron that a distinguished foreigner would like to look over her hospital.
    (b) He tried to intimidate the messenger by threats.
15. (a) The makers claim that this preparation will give complete immunity from mosquito bites.
    (b) You cannot defy the laws with impunity.
16. (a) Film stars are notoriously inconstant in their love-affairs.
    (b) His words are inconsistent with his deeds; to hear him you would think he was most high-minded, but in reality he is self-seeking and crooked.
17. (a) She sat quite impassive while the quarrel between her brothers raged over her head.
    (b) If you do such impulsive things, you must not be surprised if there are accidents which would not have happened if you had thought more carefully.
18. (a) The letter had been dropped in the wet roadway, and the ink had run so much that the writing was illegible.
    (b) He is ineligible for election to the council as he is not yet twenty-one.
19. (a) They drove up in a luxurious car, richly upholstered, and fitted with every convenience.
    (b) The luxuriant growth of creepers between the trees made the jungle very difficult to penetrate.

20. (a) He knew exactly what to do, and sailed the boat into harbour in a masterly manner.
    (b) His masterful behaviour annoyed the other apprentices, who objected to being ordered about.
21. (a) She had a momentary feeling of giddiness, but almost immediately it passed, and she continued on her way.
    (b) On the momentous occasion of the great musician's visit, our town hall was packed.
22. (a) There is no precedent for an employee being given leave of absence because it is his birthday; I must therefore refuse your request.
    (b) George Washington was the first president of the United States of America.
23. (a) "As a matter of principle, I always fast one day a week," said he.
    (b) The Principal of the college is away at present.
24. (a) The child's mother is a sensible woman, and can be trusted to carry out the doctor's instructions.
    (b) A sensitive child will quickly respond to encouragement but will be easily discouraged by reproof or harsh criticism.
25. (a) For him to agree that you were justified is a virtual admission that his secretary was in the wrong.
    (b) The children felt very virtuous since they had given up their half-holiday to help their mother.

CHAPTER V.

Exercise 1

(a) He is always blowing his own trumpet, but in actual fact, he is not nearly as competent as he pretends.
(b) She invested all her money in his crazy scheme, and lived for a while in a fool's paradise drawing huge dividends; but soon the inevitable crash came.
(c) He was head man in his old firm, but now he has to play second fiddle to a much younger man.
(d) This was the only hotel which had a vacancy, so it was a case of Hobson's choice—that or nothing!
(e) He has done a term in prison for theft, but since he has promised to turn over a new leaf, I am going to give him another chance.

(f) They used to be completely under their father's thumb, but now they have taken the bit between their teeth, and do exactly as they like.
(g) When I met him a few months ago, the poor fellow was on his beam ends—no job, no money, no home, —nothing!
(h) When we were at school he used to boss me; now that he is my subordinate in the firm, the boot is on the other leg.
(j) They accused him of showing the white feather because he didn't volunteer for the army, but he was really doing fine in the secret service.
(k) There was a rumour that numbers of the men were going to be dismissed, so I took the bull by the horns and went and asked the manager if it was true.
(l) I have excused his rudeness for some time, but this last piece of discourtesy puts him beyond the pale.
(m) If you exchange your flat for his bungalow, you will fall out of the frying pan into the fire as far as comfort is concerned.
(n) In advocating earlier pensions, I have no axe to grind, for I am already over sixty myself.
(o) If you think you are going to get a rise of salary by all this fuss, you are just crying for the moon.

EXERCISE 2

(a) A rolling stone gathers no moss.
(b) He swallowed his pride.
(c) To have an old head on your shoulders.
(d) To look for a needle in a haystack.
(e) To kill two birds with one stone.
(f) He was a square peg in a round hole.
(g) To burn the candle at both ends.
(h) To live on the edge of a volcano.
(j) Rome was not built in a day.
(k) He had a finger in every pie.
(l) He had too many irons in the fire.
(m) A stitch in time saves nine.
(n) He has one foot in the grave.
(o) To plough the sand.
(p) To put it in a nutshell.

CHAPTER VI.

EXERCISE 1

(i) For goodness' sake let's show that a whole week's work hasn't been wasted!
(ii) "Hamlet" is Shakespeare's most famous play.
(iii) "It's no use making excuse," she warned.
(iv) The poem I learned yesterday begins: "I wandered lonely as a cloud."
(v) "'The Cross Keys' is a good hotel," he said, "if you want a quiet holiday."
(vi) I do not know "I wandered lonely as a cloud," but I believe Wordsworth wrote it.
(vii) "Did you say: 'Come in'?"
(viii) "Round" can be used as many different parts of speech.
(ix) As it happens, I was talking to Abdul, the cloth merchant, yesterday.
(x) The journey was moreover, of great financial value to the merchants.

EXERCISE 2

(i) If you put a comma after children the sentence infers that you sent them with a message after having met them; if there is no comma, the children had already been sent with the message before you met them.
(ii) If no comma is inserted after "boys" and after "swimmers" the sentence indicates that only a few of the boys were allowed to swim. If commas are inserted after "boys" and "swimmers" one infers that all the boys were good swimmers, but that the girls were not, and were therefore not allowed to bathe.
(iii) a. Jones said he was very stupid.
b. "Jones," said he, "is very stupid."
c. Jones said: "He is very stupid."
(iv) a. Her mother replied: "Mary wrote the letter."
b. "Her mother," replied Mary, "wrote the letter."
(v) a. What do you want? Another apple?
b. What! Do you want another apple?

EXERCISE 3

Just before midnight the door was softly unbarred, and the gentle Ariadne showed herself, with a torch in her hand.

"Are you awake, Prince Theseus?" she whispered.

"Yes," answered Theseus. "With so little time to live, I do not choose to waste any of it in sleep."

"Then follow me," said Ariadne, "and tread softly."

What had become of the jailer and guards, Theseus never knew. But, however that might be, Ariadne opened all the doors, and led him forth from the darksome prison into the pleasant moonlight.

"Theseus," said the maiden, "You can now get on board your vessel, and sail away for Athens."

CHAPTER VII

EXERCISE 1

a. Metaphor and simile.
The metaphor talks of the "shade" and "shelter" of a man.
The words "As under the boughs of mighty oak" carry the same imagery into a simile.

b. Simile. Stars are compared with pearls.

c. Alliteration and Assonance.
Repetition of the consonants, *f* and *b* and the vowel sound *ir* or *ur*.

d. Pun. A play on the two meanings of the words "call" and "hansom" (handsome).

e. Transferred epithet. It is the man who is barefoot, not his way.

f. Synecdoche. The sail is used for the whole ship.

g. Litotes and simile. "Not all rapture" is used to mean "great discomfort."
"Like an idol of Buddha" compares the hunched up man with the idol.

h. Euphemism. "His Majesty's Guest" is a pleasing way of expressing the unpleasant fact that the man is in prison.

i. Hyperbole. It would be impossible to make a mound higher than Mount Olympus.

j. Oxymoron. The two words "honest" and "thief" are in contrast to one another.

k. Sustained, or epic, simile. The figure of the cypress tree is drawn out into a full description.

l. Mixed metaphor. One does not eat meat with a spade.

m. Metaphor. Men are looked upon as parts of a machine which drives the world economically.

n. Paradox. The last word administers a shock. It is thought to be a mistake, as the proverbial expression says:

"Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well." But on further study it is seen that the writer means that it is worth trying to do a good thing, even if one only succeeds in doing it badly.

o. Antithesis. The two parts of the sentence are balanced and contrasted.

p. Epigram. A profound truth is condensed into a short sentence.

q. Personification. Time is described as a person.

r. Apostrophe and Rhetorical Question. Death and the Grave are addressed as though they were animate. A question is asked that requires no answer.

s. Euphemism. This is a less unpleasant way of saying that fishermen tell lies.

t. Parallelism. Two sentences are antithetically opposed, each having the same construction, but using words of opposite meaning.

u. Alliteration, repetition of the initial consonant *el.*

v. Climax. The last clause is the most important.

w. Antithesis. The first part of the sentence is balanced against and contrasted with the second.

x. Hyperbole. The exploits of the person described are deliberately exaggerated for the sake of effect.

y. Sarcasm. The counsel did not mean the suggestion which he made, but rather intended to harm the accused.

z. Innuendo. Suggesting that one cannot normally rely on the word of artists.

EXERCISE 2

Parts a and b must depend on the imagination of the student.

c. The noise was heard for miles around.
His great deed will go down the centuries.
Please give us a drink; we are dying of thirst.
The name of Dickens is known throughout the world.
The battlefield was strewn with mountains of dead.

d. He took risks, but always managed to fall on his feet.
This was his Parthian shot.
He had burnt his boats.
She put the cart before the horse.
Her life had not been a bed of roses.
He burned the candle at both ends.
He has decided to turn over a new leaf.

Part II

PRECIS WRITING

The ability to make a precis or summary of a passage is essential to every educated man or woman. It requires an exact understanding of the meaning of the passage, and practice in many of the exercises given in Section I of this book.

A student is often asked first to give a title to the passage. The *topic sentence* of the passage will usually provide this, as it sums up the topic of the whole.

The average length of a precis is one third of the original. A summary can be even shorter, since only the bare facts are required.

The general rules for precis are as follows:—

(1) Change all direct speech to indirect.
(2) Find one word that means the same as several.
(See Chapter IV, page 16.)
(3) Save space by using proverbial sayings.
(See Chapter V, page 20.)
(4) Avoid long Latinised expressions.
(See Chapter I, page 3.)
(5) Cut out redundant words.
(6) Avoid circumlocution. Concentrate on simple facts.
(7) Omit any repetition of an idea already expressed.
(8) Omit illustrations of ideas expressed.
(9) Cut out all elaborate similes.
(10) Shorten sentences by turning phrases and clauses into single words.
(11) Discard all minor details.
(12) Make general statements to cover a number of particular ideas.

The general style of a precis is cold and formal. Colour, variety, excitement, all give way to a logical sequence of facts of ideas.

We will now take each of these headings separately and examine them before proceeding to practise in precis as a whole.

1. Direct and indirect speech

Direct speech quotes the exact words spoken by a person, and includes them in quotation marks, or inverted commas. In reporting or giving an account of such a speech, indirect or reported speech is generally used.

e.g. Direct speech:— "I am hungry," said John.
Indirect speech:— John said that he was hungry.

The simple rules for changing direct to indirect speech are as follows:—

(i) Remove quotation marks.
(ii) Change all verbs to the past tense.
(iii) Change all pronouns to the 3rd person.
(iv) Change all adverbs or adverbial phrases from the nearer to the more remote.

e.g.:—*to-day* to *that day; now* to *then; here* to *there; etc.*

There are other changes not so simple to express. Sometimes whole phrases have to be altered so as to include the nuances of meaning which are expressed in exclamations or colloquialisms.

e.g.:—"You scum!" bellowed Tracy threateningly. "How dare you break into my sister's room?"
"Don't hit me, sir," whined the man. "I weren't doing no harm."

Tracey, advancing towards the intruder, demanded what he was doing in his sister's room. The man cringingly protested that he was doing no harm.

EXERCISES

Change to indirect speech:

(i) "Are you a stranger to this place?" asked the villager. "Oh no!" replied the traveller. "I was born here, but I have been abroad for some years."

(ii) "Get out, Peter, you horried little boy! I won't have you in my garden."

"All right, cry-baby! If I go I shall take my tricycle. You've had two turns already."

"Now children," called Joan's mother from the window. "Try to play nicely, and don't quarrel."

(iii) Mr. Golwalla rose to his feet amid applause. "Ladies and gentlemen," he began. "It is with great pleasure that I rise to propose a vote of thanks to our speaker tonight."

(iv) Visitor. "Excuse me, could you tell me the way to Victoria Terminus?"

Townsman. "Yes, certainly. Go straight up this road till you come to an open space. Then you will see it on your right."

(v) "Who is the distinguished looking gentleman near the window?"

"My dear brother, don't you know? It is the Prime Minister."

(vi) "Good morning, madam."

"Good morning, doctor."

"What is the trouble with you today?"

"I have no appetite, doctor, and I have a very bad pain in my back."

"Ah! Let me see your tongue. Thank you. Where do you come from?"

"I live on a farm on the Merton Road."

"Do you work very hard?"

"Oh yes! We have a great many animals, and they need so much looking after."

"Have you no farm workers?"

"Yes, we have three men and a maid."

"I think what you need chiefly is rest. I will give some medicine, and you must go to bed for three days. Come and see me again on Friday."

(vii) Scene—the cloakroom of a restaurant.

1st man. "Excuse me, Sir. I think you have taken my umbrella."

2nd man. "Nothing of the sort, Sir. It is my own umbrella."

1st man. "I beg your pardon, but I think it is mine. It has my initials, R. M. on the handle."

2nd man. "Those are my initials, Sir. My name is Richard Morris."

1st man. (coldly) "And mine is Robert Martson."

2nd man. "I see you have a ready invention, Sir."

1st man. (fumbling in his pocket) "I don't happen to have my identity card on me."

2nd man. "No. I didn't suppose you would have."

1st man. Really Sir, your insinuations are most offensive.

Cloakroom attendant. "Excuse me, Sir. There is another umbrella on the floor here. Perhaps it belongs to the other gentleman."

2nd man. "How extraordinary! It is exactly like mine in every detail."

1st man. "Mine had the button missing from the piece of elastic round the top."

Attendant. "Then this must be yours, Sir. That one belongs to the other gentleman."

2nd man. Quite extraordinary, is it not? Do you go my way, Sir? I am catching a No. 19 bus."

(They tip the attendant and go out chatting amicably.)

2. FIND ONE WORD THAT MEANS THE SAME AS SEVERAL

EXERCISES

Replace the phrases in italics by a single word. You may have to alter the order of words in the sentence.

(i) He *made* the problem *quite clear* to me.

(ii) The desire for gain *urged him to commit* the crime.

(iii) The story was *such that it could not be believed.*

(iv) He was found in the act of *listening through the keyhole.*

(v) Most active people dislike work *that requires long continuance in a sitting posture.*

(vi) The actor was *speaking his thoughts aloud alone on the stage.*

(vii) My grandfather's views are *characterised by a tendency to keep things unchanged.*

(viii) This is not a statement *proceeding from a competent person.*

(ix) The doctor could not *ascertain the nature* of my complaint.

(x) Mrs. Johnson is very *prone to be swayed by sudden impulses.*

3. Save space by using proverbial sayings

EXERCISES

Condense the following sentences by using proverbial sayings:

(i) You will do much better work if you act at once while you are full of enthusiasm, than if you wait till your ardour has cooled off.

(ii) Now that he had persuaded his father to let him have a latch-key, he thought he would be able to win more and more concessions until he had obtained complete independence.

(iii) You are no doubt annoyed that it is raining today, but my garden will benefit greatly by this steady watering.

(iv) Something will happen sooner or later to put an end to this run of bad luck.

(v) It would be better to take this job that is now offered to you than to reject it in the hope of getting a better one in the future.

(vi) It is absurd to embark on an expensive project like this when you know you cannot afford it.

(vii) Only a silly man like him would attempt so impossible a task; a more sensible person would have realised the difficulties.

(viii) It is an amazing thing how those who are self-seeking and unscrupulous seem to prosper.

(ix) Your remarks will be very much more poignant if you keep them short.

(x) If you know what is going to happen to you in good time, you can take adequate precautions.

NOTE. The proverbial expressions corresponding to these sentences will be found at the end of the book.

4. Avoid long Latinized expressions

EXERCISES

Rewrite in simpler terms:

(i) He distorted his countenance in lachrimatory fossifications.

(ii) His canine companion oscillated his dorsal appendage.

(iii) The receptacle on which I take my nocturnal repose is of equal decrepitude with my own senile anatomy.

(iv) The pedestrian was incrustated by particles of disintegrated megacosm.

(v) He persisted in a condition of apparent petrifaction.

(vi) A piscatorial expedition is not vitiated by unpropitious meteorological conditions.

(vii) My matutinal ablutions were protracted by the obtundity of the instrument with which I remove by facial hirsuteness.

(viii) It is indisputable that few estimates are more liable to erroneous exaggeration than those by which a man computes the force of his own genius.

NOTE. A key to this exercise will be found at the back of the book.

5. Cut out redundant words

A redundant word is one, the sense of which has already been conveyed. E.g., in the sentence, "He rewrote the letter again," the word "again" is redundant, because "rewrote" means "wrote again."

EXERCISES

Cut out the redundant words in the following sentences:

(i) He eyed him with a look of scorn.
(ii) He is staying at a neighbouring house near by.
(iii) She at last finally decided on this wall-paper.
(iv) The various governments co-operated with one another.
(v) The accommodation at the hotel was quite adequate enough for us.
(vi) The general's exploit won the universal praise of all men everywhere.
(vii) She answered the letter immediately with the utmost promptitude.
(viii) This charitable institution has often helped the poor and indigent in time of need.
(ix) The cook mixed all the ingredients together.
(x) He is a rather oldish man.

6. Avoid circumlocution. Concentrate on simple facts

Circumlocution means "Going round". In other words, using long phrases when simple words would do. This is a habit of cheap journalism, because journalists are often paid by the number of words they write, and so they try to use as many as possible! E.g., "of tender years" instead of "young" "A member of the fairer sex" instead of "a woman."

EXERCISES

Shorten the following sentences by avoiding circumlocution;

(i) He was in an intoxicated condition.
(ii) The larder is completely void of comestibles.
(iii) I was accommodated with inexpensive living quarters in the adjacent neighbourhood.
(iv) He is about to enter into a state of marital blessedness.
(v) Your conduct has always been of the most excellent and admirable description.
(vi) I should be extremely happy if it should be within my power to grant you any assistance.
(vii) I had at last brought about the result towards which I had been devoting all my energies.
(viii) I carried into execution the plan which had already occurred to me.
(ix) He had no sooner sought the shelter of his couch when the god of sleep laid his healing hand upon his eyes.
(x) He directed my attention towards a sacred edifice in which a nuptial ceremony was taking place.

7. Omit any repetition of an idea already expressed

Ideas are often expressed by a figure of speech, and then repeated in another form for emphasis. In a precis, the repetition must be omitted.

EXERCISES

Rewrite the following sentences, omitting repetitions:

(i) In this emergency, you must all pull up your socks and put your shoulders to the wheel.
(ii) The Minister assured the House that the Government would leave no stone unturned and no avenue unexplored to find a solution to the problem.
(iii) The blossom is blighted, the leaf is withered, the god of day goes down upon the dreary scene. (Mr. Micawber in *David Copperfield*.)

(iv) When you have done this for me, the balance will be even and there will be no obligation on either side.

(v) He is a man full of hypocrisy, meanness, knavery and lip-service.

(vi) There was a cordial candour in his manner and an engaging confidence in his behaviour.

(vii) The sun had set, dusk was falling, and darkness was spreading across the sky.

(viii) He remained strictly neutral and did not commit himself to the views of either party.

8. OMIT ILLUSTRATIONS OF IDEAS EXPRESSED.

Illustrations are a useful method of making the meaning clear and the style more colourful, but in precis they are unnecessary since they merely repeat the idea already expressed.

EXERCISES

Shorten the following sentences by omitting the illustrations:

(i) She certainly looked very ill; her face was as white as a sheet.

(ii) There are several methods of getting rid of unwanted guests; you can express concern lest they should miss a good train home; you can mention an urgent appointment which you must keep some distance away during the next half hour; you can request them firmly to depart; or you can just kick them out!

(iii) He put his trembling hands to his head and gave a wild, ringing scream, the cry of desolation.

(iv) "Well then," said Faithful, "What is that one thing that we shall found our discourse upon?"
"What you will," answered Talkative. "I will talk of things heavenly, of things earthly, things moral or things evangelical; things scared or things profane; things past or things to come; things foreign or things at home; things more essential, or things circumstantial."

(v) You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive.
Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that;
But say it is my humour: is it answered?
What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it ban'd? What, are you answered yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
Some that are mad if they behold a cat:
And others when the bagpipe sings i' the nose
Cannot contain them; for affection
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood.
Of what it likes or loathes. Now for your answer:
As there is no firm reason to be rendered
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
Why he a harmless necessary cat;
Why he a swollen bagpipe: but of force
Must yield to such inevitable shame
As to offend, himself being offended:
So I can give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio.

Shakespeare — *The Merchant of Venice*

9. CUT OUT ALL ELABORATE SIMILES.

A simile is a form of illustration; in precis writing all figures of speech must be removed and the facts stated plainly and simply

EXERCISES

Remove the figurative language from the following sentences thereby reducing their length:

(i) Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green
That host with its banners at sunset was seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn has blown
That host on the morrow, lay withered and strown
(Byron)

(ii) The laughter of a child scatters depression as a gleam of sunshine scatters the dark clouds.

(iii) When she saw the burglar, she made a noise like an express train going into a tunnel.

(iv) Historians differ at the very outset, and mere pebbles make the stream of truth diverge into different channels, even at the fountain head.

(v) His spirit quitted his earthly habitation and winged its way to eternity.

(vi) Pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow-flake in the river,
A moment white — then melts for ever. (Burns)

(vii) I looked on my cherished wishes, yesterday so blooming and growing; they lay stark and chill, livid corpses that could never revive. I looked at my love.... ....it shivered in my heart like a suffering child in a cold cradle.

(viii) At once they rushed
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west.

10. SHORTEN SENTENCES BY TURNING PHRASES AND CLAUSES INTO SINGLE WORDS.

In composition, the sound and balance of a sentence often requires a phrase or a clause which means no more than a single word. In precis, shortness is more necessary than euphony, and therefore the single word must be substituted wherever possible, e.g., "which was very peculiar," or "in a peculiar," can be replaced by "peculiarly."

EXERCISES

Shorten the following sentences by recasting them into simple sentences, replacing the phrases or clauses by single words:

(i) When tomorrow arrives, I will answer the letter which I hold in my hand.

(ii) The man who could not see went along feeling his way with his hands.

(iii) The sea was covered with waves which had white crests and looked enormous.

(iv) I was tormented by a variety of the insects which usually flourish during the summer months.

(v) The schoolmaster, who had a very hot temper, stormed at the children who sat cowering before him.

(vi) The jury decided that the prisoner was not guilty of the crime.

(vii) Say what you have to say in as short a manner as possible.

(viii) He set out all the information which had been given to him under different headings.

(ix) Everybody is liable to make mistakes from time to time.

(x) When the winter months came, the waters of the lake turned into solid ice.

PASSAGES FOR PRECIS

All the passages which follow have been taken from among the best English authors. The student will find them useful as models for style in writing as well as for purposes of practice in precis.

Make a precis of the following passage in not more than 200 words:—

Among the rude nations which lay beyond the Alps, valour was absolutely indispensable. Without it, none could be eminent; few could be secure. Cowardice was, therefore, naturally considered as the foulest reproach. Among the polished Italians, enriched by commerce, governed by law, and passionately attached to literature, everything was done by superiority of intelligence. Their very wars, more pacific than the peace of their neighbours, required rather civil than military qualifications. Hence, while courage was the point of honour in other countries, ingenuity became the point of honour in Italy.

By these principles were deduced, by processes strictly analogous, two opposite systems of fashionable morality. Through the greater part of Europe, the vices which peculiarly belong to timid dispositions, and which are the natural defence of weakness, fraud, and hypocrisy, have always been most disreputable. On the other hand, the excesses of haughty and daring spirits have been treated with indulgence and even with respect. The Italians regarded with corresponding lenity those crimes which require self-command and address, quick observation, fertile invention, and profound knowledge of human nature.

Such a prince as our Henry the Fifth would have been the idol of the North. The follies of his youth, the selfish ambition of his manhood, the Lollards roasted at slow fires, the prisoners massacred on the field of battle, the expiring lease of priestcraft renewed for another century, the dreadful legacy of a causeless and hopeless war bequeathed to a people who had no interest in its

event, everything is forgotten in the victory if Agincourt. Francis Sforza, on the other hand, was the model of Italian heroes. He made his employers and his rivals alike his tools. He first overpowered his open enemies by the help of faithless allies; he then armed himself against his allies with the spoils taken from his enemies. By his incomparable dexterity, he raised himself from the precarious and dependent situation of a military adventurer to the first throne of Italy. To such a man much was forgiven, hollow friendship, ungenerous enmity, violated faith. Such are the opposite errors which men commit when their morality is not a science but a taste, when they abandon eternal principles for accidental associations.

We have illustrated our meaning by an instance taken from history. We will select another from fiction. Othello murders his wife; he gives orders for the murder of his lieutenant; he ends by murdering himself. Yet he never loses the esteem and affection of Northern readers. His intrepid and ardent spirit redeems everything. The unsuspecting confidence with which he listens to his adviser, the agony with which he shrinks from the thought of shame, the tempest of passion with which he commits his crimes, and the haughty fearlessness with which he avows them, give an extraordinary interest to his character. Iago, on the other hand, is the object of universal loathing. Many are inclined to suspect that Shakespeare has been seduced into an exaggeration unusual with him and has drawn a monster who has no archetype in human nature. Now we suspect that an Italian audience in the fifteenth century would have felt very differently. Othello would have inspired nothing but detestation and contempt. The folly with which he trusts the friendly professions of a man whose promotion he had obstructed, the credulity with which he takes unsupported assertions and trivial circumstances for unanswerable proofs, the violence with which he silences the exculpation till the exculpation can only aggravate his misery would have excited the abhorrence and disgust of the spectators. The conduct of Iago they would assuredly have condemned; but they would have condemned it as we condemn that of his victim. Something of interest and respect would have mingled with their disapprobation. The readiness of the

traitor's wit, the clearness of his judgment, the skill with which he penetrates the dispositions of others and conceals his own, would have insured to him a certain portion of their esteem.

Macaulay — *Essay on Machiavelli.*

NOTES

This passage affords excellent opportunities for practice in precis writing. Note the many illustrations with which the writer supports his statements. Note also the careful and logical way in which the ideas are expressed. The advanced student in essay writing will also find excellent examples here of the balanced sentence, antithesis, and climax. (See Chapter VII on Figures of Speech.)

* * * *

(i) Give a suitable title to this passage.

(ii) Make a precis of the passage in not more than 160 words.

"I have desired," said Elizabeth proudly to her Parliament, "to have the obedience of my subjects by love, and not by compulsion." It was a love fairly won by justice and good government. Buried as she seemed in foreign negotiations and intrigues, Elizabeth was above all an English sovereign. She devoted herself ably and energetically to the task of civil administration. She had hardly mounted the throne, indeed, when she faced the problem of social discontent. Time, and the natural development of new branches of industry were working quietly for the relief of the glutted labour market; but a vast mass of disorder still existed in England, which found a constant ground of resentment in the enclosures and evictments which accompanied the progress of agricultural change.... It was on this host of "broken men" that every rebellion could count for support; their mere existence, indeed, was an encouragement to civil war, while in peace their presence was felt in the insecurity of life and property, in gangs of marauders which held whole countries in terror, and in "sturdy beggars" who stripped travellers on the road.

Under Elizabeth, as under her predecessors, the terrible measures of repression went pitilessly on; we find the magistrates of Somersetshire capturing a gang of a hundred at a stroke, hanging fifty at once on the gallows, and complaining bitterly to the

Council of the necessity for waiting till the Assizes before they could enjoy the spectacle of the fifty others hanging beside them. But the issue of a Royal commission to enquire into the whole matter enabled the government to deal with the difficulty in a wiser and more effectual way. The old powers to enforce labour on the idle, and settlement on the vagrant class, were continued; but a distinction was for the first time drawn between these and the impotent and destitute persons who had been confounded with them; and each town and parish was held responsible for the relief of its indigent and disabled poor, as it had long been responsible for the employment of able-bodied mendicants. When voluntary contributions proved insufficient for this purpose, the justices in sessions were enabled by statute to assess all persons in town or parish who refused to contribute in proportion to their ability. The principles embodied in these measures, the principle of local responsibility for local distress and that of a distinction between the pauper and the vagabond, were more clearly defined in a statute which marked the middle period of Elizabeth's reign. By this Act houses of correction were ordered to be established for the punishment and amendment of the vagabond class by means of compulsory labour; while the power to levy and assess a general rate in each parish for the relief of the poor was transferred from the justices to its churchwardens. The well-known act which matured and finally established the system remained the basis of our system of pauper administration until a time within the recollection of living men. Whatever flaws a later experience has found in these measures, their wise and humane character formed a striking contrast to the legislation which had degraded our statute-book from the date of the Statute of Labourers; and their efficacy at the time was proved by the entire cessation of the great social danger against which they were intended to provide.

John Richard Green — *A Short History of the English People.*

* * * *

(i) Give a suitable title to the following passage.

(ii) Make a precis of the passage in not more than 120 words.

Britain was not subdued by the Romans till the time of Claudius Caesar. When conquered, it was still permitted to possess a king of its own, on condition that he should acknowledge the authority of Rome, and pay tribute to her. The first king in the world to confess the faith of Christ was a British king, tributary to Rome. This king, whose name was Llesap Coel, made his confession as early as the year 160. The Christian faith is supposed by some to have been first preached in Britain by Joseph of Arimathea: by others, by St. Paul himself. After remaining several centuries under the sway of Rome, the Britons again became independent, the Roman legions being withdrawn from the island for the defence of their own country, threatened by barbarian hordes. They did not, however, enjoy their independence long: a ferocious race of mysterious origin, whom they called Gwyddelian Fichti, invaded them, and filled their country with horror and devastation. Unable to offer any effectual opposition to these invaders, they called to their assistance from the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Elbe, the Saxons, or *men of the knives*, a bold and adventurous, but treacherous and bloody people, who at first fought stoutly for them, but soon turned against them, and eventually all but extirpated them from Southern Britain:

"A serpent that coils,
And with fury boils,
From Germany coming with arm'd wings spread,
Shall subdue and shall enthrall
The Broad Britain all
From Lochlin ocean to Severn's bed;
And British men
Shall be captives then
To strangers from Saxonia's strand;
They shall praise their God, and hold
Their language, as of old,
But except wild Wales, they shall lose their land."

(Taliesin.)

Yes; the Cymric or British race were dispossessed of Britain with the exception of that part which they still emphatically

call Cumrie, but which by other people is called Wales. There they remained independent for a long time, governed by their own princes; and there, though now under the sway of England, they still preserve their venerable language, the oldest in the world, with perhaps the exception of the Gaulic or Irish, with which it is closely connected. "Wales" is not a Cymric but a Saxon or Teutonic word, bestowed on the land of the Cymry by the seed of Hengist. Like the Gaelic word "Alban," it means a hilly or mountainous region, and is connected with wall, wold, and wood. The Germans from very early times, have called the Cymry Welsh or Waldenses, and the country where they happened to be, Welschland. They still apply to Italy the name of Welschland, a name originally principally peopled by the Cymry, whom the Germans called Welsh from the circumstance of their inhabiting some mountainous or forest country in the far East when they first came in contact with them.

George Borrow — *Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings.*

NOTES. This passage gives good examples of the points mentioned at the beginning of this section. Note the frequent illustrations, repetitions, and circumlocution. "The seed of Hengist" for example means simply "Saxons." The poem is of course, an illustration, and should be omitted in the precis.

* * * *

(i) Supply a concise title for the following passage.
(ii) Make a precis of the passage in not more than 180 words.

The character of the country became changed: I had ridden away from the level tracts, and before me now, and on either side, there were vast hills of sand and calcined rocks that interrupted my progress, and baffled my doubtful road, but I did my best: with rapid steps I swung round the base of the hills, threaded the winding hollows, and at last, as I rose in my swift course to the crest of a lofty ridge, Thalatta! Thalatta! I saw the sea!

The Red sea! It might well claim my earnest gaze by force of the great Jewish migration which connects it with the history of our own religion. From this very ridge, it is likely enough, the panting Israelites first saw that shining

inlet of the sea: ay, ay! but moreover, and best of all, that beckoning sea assured my eyes, and proved how well I had marked out the east for my path, and gave me good promiser that sooner or later the time would come for me to rest and drink. It was distant, the sea, but I felt my own strength, and I had heard of the strength of dromedaries. I pushed forward as eagerly as if I had spoiled the Egyptians, and were flying from Pharoah's police.

I had not yet been able to discover any symptoms of Suez, but after a while I described in the distance a large, blank, isolated building; I made towards this, and in time got down to it. The building was a fort, and had been built there for the protection of a well contained within its precincts. A cluster of small huts adhered to the fort, and in a short time, I was receiving the hospitality of the inhabitants, a score or so people who sat grouped upon the sands near their hamlet. To quench the fires of my throat with about a gallon of muddy water, and to swallow a little of the food placed before me was the work of a few minutes, and before the astonishment of my hosts had even begun to subside, I was pursuing my onward journey. Suez, I found, was still three hours distant, and the sun going down in the west warned me I must find some other guide to keep me straight. This guide I found in the most fickle and uncertain of the elements. For some hours the wind had been freshening, and it now blew a violent gale; it blew — not fitfully and in squalls — but with such steadiness, that I felt convinced it would blow from the same quarter for several hours; so when the sun set, I carefully looked for the point whence the wind came, and found that it blew from the very west — blew exactly in the direction of my route. I had nothing to do therefore but to go straight to leeward, and this I found easy enough, for the gale was blowing so hard that, if I diverged at all from my course, I instantly felt the pressure of the blast on the side towards which I deviated. Very soon after sunset, there came on complete darkness, but the strong wind guided me well, and sped me on my way.

I reached Suez at last. The British agent, though roused from his midnight sleep, received me in his home with the

utmost kindness and hospitality. How delightful it was to lie on fair sheets, and to dally with sleep, and to wake, and to sleep and to wake once more, for the sake of sleeping again.

Kinglake —*Eothen.*

* * * *

(i) Give a suitable title to this passage.
(ii) Make a precis of the passage in not more than 100 words.

This then was the secret of John Friend's wealth and position. He was in the pay of Napoleon as a spy on his own country.

His father, a man of good standing, had unfortunately inherited a title to a large property consisting partly of money in the Funds and partly of a West Indian estate; but his right was disputed by a distant relative. The latter had the longer purse, and used it in the adoption of every device known to chicanery to wear down his adversary. The suit dragged on for more than forty years; and though his advisors always assured Mr. Friend that his claim should succeed, he was ruined before he could obtain a decision. The property therefore fell to the other claimant; and Mr. Friend, after five years' exile, died at Boulogne a broken-hearted man. Young Friend passed his boyhood under the shadow of this disastrous suit. Being left destitute on the death of his father, interest was made to get him a subordinate post in a Government Office. He was then barely sixteen, but soon distinguished himself by his intelligence and industry. He was transferred to the Foreign Office, where he rapidly rose to a position of confidence.

But he meant to make money. He was utterly unscrupulous and of an intellect that delighted in intrigue. He had had no moral training, and only the perfunctory religious instruction of a public school; for his father was a free thinker and a sceptic; in his younger and more prosperous days a scoffer like his master Voltaire, and latterly a bitter and envenomed hater of Christianity. The son had grown up constantly hearing that he was defrauded of his rights; that Government was in league with the oppressor to rob him; that there was no justice to be looked for from the laws,

and no hope of redress that he did not exact for himself. So being of great ambition and strong will, he determined to make the best position he could for himself by any means which came in his way.

Mrs. Garnett — *The Infamous John Friend.*

* * * *

(i) Give a title to the following passage.
(ii) Make a precis of the passage in not more than 100 words.

Of all the creatures of commercial enterprise, a canal barge is by far the most delightful to consider. It may spread its sails, and then you see it sailing high above the tree-tops and the wind-mill, sailing on the aqueduct, sailing through the green corn lands: the most picturesque of things amphibious. Or the horse plods along at a foot-pace as if there were no such thing as business in the world; and the man dreaming at the tiller sees the same spire on the horizon all day long. It is a mystery how things ever get to their destination at this rate; and to see the barges waiting their turn at a lock, affords a fine lesson of how easily the world may be taken. There should be many contented spirits on board, for such a life is both to travel and to stay at home.

The chimney smokes for dinner as you go along; the banks of the canal slowly unroll their scenery to contemplative eyes; the barge floats by great forest and through great cities with their public buildings and their lamps at night; and for the bargee, in his floating home, "travelling abed," it is merely as if he were listening to another man's story or turning the leaves of a picture book in which he had no concern. He may take his afternoon walk in some foreign country on the banks of the canal, and then come home to dinner at his own fire-side.

There is not enough exercise in such a life for any high measure of health; but a high measure of health is only necessary for unhealthy people. The slug of a fellow, who is never ill nor well, has a quiet time of it in life, and dies all the easier.

I am sure I would rather be a bargee than occupy any position under Heaven that required attendance at an office.

There are few callings, I should say, where a man gives up less of his liberty in return for regular meals. The bargee is on ship-board — he is master in his own ship — he can land whenever he will — he can never be kept beating off a leeshore a whole frosty night when the sheets are as hard as iron; and as far as I can make out, time stands as nearly still with him as is compatible with the return of bed-time or the dinner-hour. It is not easy to see why a bargee should ever die.

R. L. Stevenson — *An Inland Voyage.*

NOTES. This is not an easy passage to precis because of its poetic character. It affords, however, some good examples of illustration and hyperbole which can be expressed more prosaically. For the student of essay writing, it is an excellent model for descriptive writing.

* * * *

(i) Give a title to the following passage.
(ii) Make a precis of the passage in not more than 100 words.

All the dangers by which the traveller was beset were greatly increased by darkness. He was therefore commonly desirous of having the shelter of a roof during the night; and such shelter it was not difficult to obtain. From a very early period the inns of England had been renowned. Our first great poet, Chaucer, had described the excellent accommodation which they afforded to the pilgrims of the fourteenth century. Nine and twenty persons with their horses, found room in the wide chambers and stables of the Tabard at Southwark. The food was of the best, and the wines such as drew the company on to drink largely. Two hundred years later, under the reign of Elizabeth, William Harrison gave a lively description of the plenty and comfort of the great hostelries. The continent of Europe, he said, could show nothing like them. There were some in which two or three hundred people with their horses, could without difficulty be lodged and fed. The bedding, the tapestry, above all, the abundance of clean and fine linen, was a matter of wonder. Valuable plate was often set on the tables. Nay, there were inn signs which had cost thirty or forty pounds. In the seventeenth century, England abounded with

excellent inns of every rank. The traveller sometimes, in a small village, lighted on a public house such as Walton has described, where the brick floor was swept clean, where the walls were stuck round with ballads, where the sheets smelt of lavender, and where a blazing fire, a cup of good ale, and a dish of trouts fresh from the neighbouring brook, were to be procured at a small charge. At the larger houses of entertainment were to be found beds hung with silk, choice cookery, and claret equal to the best which was drunk in London. The innkeepers too, it was said, were not like other innkeepers. On the Continent the landlord was the tyrant of those who crossed the threshold. In England he was a servant. Never was an Englishman more at home than when he took his ease in his inn. Even men of fortune, who might in their own mansions have enjoyed every luxury, were often in the habit of passing their evening in the parlour of some neighbouring house of public entertainment. They seem to have thought that comfort and freedom could in no other place be enjoyed in equal perfection. This feeling continued during many generations to be a national peculiarity. The liberty and jollity of inns long furnished matter to our novelists and dramatists. Johnson declared that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity; and Shenstone gently complained that no private roof, however friendly, gave the wanderer so warm a welcome as that which was to be found at an inn.

Lord Macaulay — *History of England.*

NOTES. Walton (1593-1683) wrote *The Compleat Angler.* Samuel Johnson was the great dictionary writer. Shenstone was a poet of the eighteenth century.

* * * *

(i) Give a title to the following passage.
(ii) Make a precis of the passage in not more than 150 words.

These Arabs Mahomet was born among are certainly a notable people. Their country itself is notable; a fit habitation for such a race. Savage inaccessible rock-mountains, great grim desert, alternating with beautiful strips of verdure: wherever water is, there is, greenness, beauty; odoriferous balm-shrubs, date-trees, frankincense-trees. Consider

that wide waste horizon of sand, empty, silent, like a sand-sea, dividing, habitable place from habitable. You are all alone there, left alone with the Universe; by day a fierce sun blazing down on it with intolerable radiance; by night the great deep Heaven with its stars. Such a country is fit for a swift-handed, deep-hearted race of men. There is something most agile, active, and yet most meditative, enthusiastic in the Arab character. The Persians are called the French of the East; we will call the Arabs Oriental Italians. A gifted noble people; a people of wild strong feelings, and of iron restraint over these: the characteristic of noble-mindedness, of genius. The wild Bedouin welcomes the stranger to his tent, as one having right to all that is there; were it his worst enemy, he will slay his foal to treat him, will serve him with sacred hospitality for three days, will set him fairly on his way;—and then, by another law as sacred, kill him if he can. In words too, as in action. They are not a loquacious people, taciturn rather; but eloquent, gifted when they do speak. An earnest, truthful kind of men. They are, as we know, of Jewish kindred; but with that deadly terrible earnestness of the Jews, they seem to combine something graceful, brilliant, which is not Jewish. They had "Poetic contests" among them before the time of Mahomet. At Ocadh, in the South of Arabia, there were yearly fairs, and there, when the merchandising was done, Poets sang for prizes:—the wild people gathered to hear that.

On Jewish quality these Arabs manifest; the outcome of many or of all high qualities; what we may call religiosity. From of old they had zealous worshippers according to their light. They worshipped the stars, as Sabeans; worshipped many natural objects,—recognised them as symbols, immediate manifestations, of the Maker of Nature. It was wrong; and yet not wholly wrong. All God's works are still in a sense symbols of God. Do we not, as I urged, still account it a merit to recognise a certain inexhaustible significance, "poetic beauty" as we name it, in all natural objects whatsoever? A man is a poet, and honoured, for doing that, and speaking or singing it,—a kind of diluted worship. They had many Prophets, these Arabs; Teachers each to his tribe, each according to the light he had. But indeed, have we not from of old

noblest of proofs, still palpable to every one of us, of what devoutness and noble-mindedness had dwelt in these rustic, thoughtful peoples? Biblical critics seem agreed that our own Book of Job was written in that region of the world. I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels indeed as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble Book; all men's Book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending Problem,—man's destiny, and God's ways with him here in this earth. And all in such free, flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity; in its epic melody, and repose of reconcilement. There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart. So true everyway; true eyesight and vision for all things; material things no less than spiritual; the Horse, "hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?"—he "laughs at the shaking of the spear!" Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind; —so soft and great; as summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out if it, of equal literary merit.

Thomas Carlyle—*Heroes and Hero-Worship.*

NOTES. Carlyle's style is difficult, and in some places obscure. His punctuation is unusual, and his use of capital letters does not follow modern convention. The student should not allow himself to be put off by these difficulties. The general sense of the passage is clear; all oddities can be omitted in the precis. The first sentence would be easier to follow if it were printed as follows: "These Arabs, among whom Mahomet was born, are certainly a notable people." The last section on the Book of Job can be dealt with very shortly; it is merely an illustration of the poetic feeling of the Arabs.

* * * *

Make a precis of the following passage, rendering the speech into reported speech:

If we can prefer personal merit to accidental greatness, we shall esteem the birth of Tacitus truly noble than that of Kings. He claimed his descent from the philosophic historian, whose writings will instruct the last generations of mankind. The senator Tacitus was then seventy-five years of age. The long

period of his innocent life was adorned with wealth and honours. He had twice been invested with the consular dignity, and enjoyed with elegance and sobriety his ample patrimony of between two and three millions sterling. The experience of so many princes whom he had esteemed or endured, from the vain follies of Elagabalus to the useful rigour of Aurelian, taught him to form a just estimate of the duties, the dangers and the temptations of their sublime station. From the assiduous study of his immortal ancestor, he derived the knowledge of the Roman constitution, and of human nature. The voice of the people had already named Tacitus as the citizen the most worthy of empire. The ungrateful rumour reached his ears, and induced him to seek the retirement of one of his villas in Campania. He had passed two months in delightful privacy of Baiae, when he reluctantly obeyed the summons of the consul to resume his honourable place in the senate, and to assist the republic with his counsels on this important occasion.

He arose to speak, when, from every quarter of the house, he was saluted with the name of Augustus and Emperor. "Tacitus Augustus, the gods preserve thee; we choose thee for our sovereign; to thy care we entrust the republic and the world. Accept the empire from the authority of the senate. It is due to thy rank, to thy conduct, to thy manners." As soon as the tumult of acclamations subsided, Tacitus attempted to decline the dangerous honour, and to express his wonder that they should elect his age and infirmities to succeed the marital vigour of Aurelian. "Are these limbs, conscript fathers, fitted to sustain the weight of armour, or to practise the exercises of the camp? The variety of climates and the hardships of a military life would soon oppress a feeble constitution, which subsists only by the most tender management. My exhausted strength scarcely enables me to discharge the duty of a senator; how insufficient would it prove to the arduous labours of war and government! Can you hope that the legions will respect a weak old man, whose days have been spent in the shade of peace and retirement? Can you desire that I should ever find reason to regret the favourable opinion of the senate?

The reluctance of Tacitus, and it might possibly be sincere, was encountered by the affectionate obstinacy of the senate. Five hundred voices repeated at once, in eloquent confusion, that the greatest of the Roman princes, Numra, Trajan, Hadrian

and the Antonines had ascended the throne in a very advanced season of life; that the mind, not the body, a sovereign, not a soldier, was the object of their choice; and that they expected from him no more than to guide, by his wisdom, the valour of the legions. The pressing though tumultuary instances were seconded by a more regular oration of Metius Falconius, the next on the consular bench to Tacitus himself. He reminded the assembly of the evils which Rome had endured from the vices of headstrong and capricious youths; congratulated them on the election of a virtuous and experienced senator; and with a manly, though perhaps a selfish freedom, exhorted Tacitus to remember the reasons of his elevation, and to seek a successor, not in his own family, but in the republic. The speech of Falconius was enforced by a general acclamation. The emperor elect submitted to the authority of his country, and received the voluntary homage of his equals. The judgment of the senate was confirmed by the consent of the Roman people, and of the praetorian guards.

Gibbon—*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

* * * *

(i) Tell the following story more shortly and simply:—

Some countrymen of Lycia once insulted the goddess Latona, but not with impunity. When I was young, my father, who had grown too old for active labours, sent me to Lycia to drive thence some choice oxen, and there I saw the very pond and marsh where the wonder happened. Near by stood an ancient altar, black with the smoke of sacrifice, and almost buried among the reeds. I enquired whose altar it might be, whether of Faunus or the Naiads, or some god of the neighbouring mountain, and one of the country people replied: "No, mountain or river god possesses this altar, but she whom royal Juno in her jealousy drove from land to land, denying her any spot of earth whereon to rear her twins. Bearing in her arms the infant deities; Latona reached this land, weary with her burden, and parched with thirst. By chance she espied in the bottom of the valley this pond of clear water, where the country people were at work gathering willows and osiers. The goddess approached, and kneeling on the bank would have slacked her thirst in the cool stream, but the rustics forbade her. "Why do you refuse me water?" said she; "Water is free to all. Nature

allows no one to claim as property the sunshine, the air, or the water. I come to take my share of the common blessing. Yet I ask it of you as a favour. I have no intention of washing my limbs in it, weary though they be, but only to quench my thirst. My mouth is so dry that I can hardly speak. A draught of water would be nectar to me; it would revive me and I would own myself indebted to you for life itself. Let these infants move your pity, who stretch out their little arms as if to plead for me," and the children, as it happened were stretching out their arms.

Who would not have been moved with these gentle words of the goddess? But these clowns persisted in their rudeness; they even added jeers and threats of violence if she did not leave the place. Nor was this all. They waded into the pond and stirred up the mud with their feet, so as to make the water unfit to drink. Latona was so angry that she ceased to mind her thirst. She no longer supplicated the clowns, but lifting her hands to Heaven, exclaimed: "May they never quit that pool, but pass their lives there!" And it came to pass accordingly. They now live in the water sometimes totally submerged, then raising their heads above the water or swimming upon it. Sometimes they come out upon the bank, but soon leap back again into the water. They still use their base voices in railing, and though they have the water all to themselves, are not ashamed to croak in the middle of it. Their voices are harsh, their throats bloated, their mouths have become stretched by constant railing, their necks have shrunk up and disappeared, and their heads are joined to their bodies. Their backs are green, their disproportioned bellies, white, and in short, they are now frogs, and dwell in the slimy pool.

Thomas Bullfinch—*The Age of Fable.*

* * * *

Rewrite the following letter in simpler language, using not more than 100 words.

The Honourable Mrs. Jamieson has only just quitted me; and, in the course of conversation, she communicated to me the intelligence that she had yesterday received a call from her revered husband's quondam friend, Lord Mauleverer.

You will not easily conjecture what brought his lordship within the precincts of our little town; it was to see Captain Brown, with whom, it appears, his lordship was acquainted in the "plumed wars," and who had the privilege of averting destruction from his lordship's head, when some great peril was impending over it, off the misnomered Cape of Good Hope. You know our friend the Honourable Mrs. Jamieson's deficiency in the spirit of innocent curiosity; and you will not therefore be so much surprised when I tell you that she was quite unable to disclose to me the exact nature of the peril in question. I was anxious, I confess, to ascertain in what manner Captain Brown, with his limited establishment, could receive so distinguished a guest; and I discovered that his lordship retired to rest, and, let us hope, to refreshing slumbers, at the Angel Hotel; but shared the Brunoniam meals during the two days that he honoured Cranford with his presence. Mrs. Johnson, our civil butcher's wife, informs me that Miss Jessie purchased a leg of lamb; but besides this, I can hear of no preparations whatever to give a suitable reception to so distinguished a visitor. Perhaps they entertained him with "the feast of reason and the flow of soul;" and to us who are acquainted with Captain Brown's sad want of relish for "the pure wells of English undefiled," it may be matter for congratulation that he has had the opportunity of improving his taste by holding converse with an elegant and refined member of the British aristocracy. But from some mundane feelings, who is altogether free?

Mrs. Gaskell—*Cranford.*

* * * *

Tell the following story in third person and condense it to about one third of its present length:—

It happened that my brother and myself were playing one evening in a sandy lane in the neighbourhood of this Pett camp; our mother was at a slight distance. All of a sudden a bright yellow, and to my infantile eye, beautiful and glorious object made its appearance at top of the bank from between the thick quickset, and, gliding down, began to move across the lane to the other side like a line of golden light. Uttering a cry of pleasure, I sprang forward, and seized it nearly by the middle. A strange sensation of numbing coldness seemed to pervade

my whole arm, which surprised me the more as the object to my eye appeared so warm and sunlike. I did not drop it, however, but, holding it up, looked at it intently as its head dangled about a foot from my arm. It made no resistance; I felt not even the slightest struggle; but now my brother began to scream and shriek like one possessed. "O, mother, mother," said he, "the viper! my brother has a viper in his hand!" He then like one frantic, made an effort to snatch the creature away from me. The viper now hissed again, and raised his head, in which were eyes like hot coals, menacing, not myself, but my brother. I dropped my captive, for I saw my mother running towards me; and the reptile, after standing for a moment nearly erect, and still hissing furiously, made off and disappeared. The whole scene is now before me, as vividly as if it occurred yesterday—the gorgeous viper, my poor dear frantic brother, my agitated parent, and a frightened hen clucking under the bushes; and yet I was not three years old.

It is my firm belief that certain individuals possesses an inherent power, or fascination, over certain creatures, otherwise I should not be able to account for many feats which I have witnessed and indeed, borne a share in, connected with the taming of brutes and reptiles. I have known a savage and vicious mare, whose stall it was dangerous to approach even when bearing provender, welcome, nevertheless, with every appearance of pleasure, an uncouth, wiry-headed man with a frightfully seamed face and an iron hook supplying the place of his right arm, one whom the animal had never seen before, playfully bite his hair and cover his face with gentle and endearing kisses; and I have already stated how a viper would permit, without resentment, one child to take it up in his hand whilst it showed its dislike to the approach of another by the fiercest hissings. Philosophy can explain many strange things, but there are some which are a far pitch above her, and this is one.

George Borrow—*Lavengro.*

* * * *

(i) Make a precis of the following passage in about 200 words:—

Hence it is that it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say that he is one who never inflicts pain. This definition

is both refined and, as far as it goes, accurate. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him. The true gentleman in like-manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast—all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make everyone at their ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unreasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favours while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort, he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. From a long-sighted prudence, he observes the axiom of the ancient sage that we should ever conduct ourselves towards our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend. He has too much good sense to be affronted at insults, he is too well employed to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice. He is patient, forbearing, and resigned, on philosophical principles; he submits to pain because it is inevitable, to bereavement because it is irreparable, and to death because it is his destiny. If he engages in controversy of any kind his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better, though less educated minds; who, like blunt weapons, hack and tear instead of cutting clean, who mistake the point in argument, waste their strength on trifles, misconceive their adversary, and leave the question more involved than they find it. He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to the unjust; he is as simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive. Nowhere shall we find greater candour, consideration, indulgence: he throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of human reason

as well as its strength, its province and its limits. If he be an unbeliever, he will be too propound and large-minded to ridicule religion or to act against it; is too wise to be a dogmatist or fanatic in his infidelity. He respects piety and devotion; he even supports institutions as venerable, beautiful, or useful, to which he does not assent; he honours the ministers of religion, and he is contented to decline its mysteries without assailing or denouncing them. He is a friend of religious toleration, and that not only because his philosophy has taught him to look on all forms of faith with an impartial eye, but also from the gentleness and effeminacy of feeling which is the attendant on civilization.

Not that he may not hold a religion too, in his own way, even when he is not a Christian. In that case his religion is one of imagination and sentiment; it is the embodiment of those ideas of the sublime, majestic and beautiful without which there can be no large philosophy. Sometimes he acknowledges the being of God, sometimes he invests an unknown principle or quality with the attributes of perfection. And this deduction of his reason, or creation of his fancy, he makes the occasion of such excellent thoughts, and the starting-point of so varied and systematic a teaching that he seems even like a disciple of Christianity itself.

John Henry Newman—*The Ideal of a University.*

NOTES. This is a portrait made up of a number of details. When writing a precis, the student must decide which are the most important of these, and which sum up best the general idea which the writer is putting forward. There are some obvious illustrations which may be omitted.

The passage is an excellent example of the balance and movement of English prose of the 19th century.

(i) Give a title to the following passage.
(ii) Write a summary in about 150 words.

In the month of August 1815, George Stephenson requested his friend Nicholas Wood, to prepare a drawing of a lamp according to the description which he gave him. After several evenings' careful deliberations the drawing was made, and shown to some of the head men about the works.

Stephenson proceeded to order a lamp to be made by a Newcastle tinman according to his plan; and at the same time he directed a glass to be made for the lamp. Both were received by him from the makers on the 21st October, and the lamp was taken to Killingworth for the purpose of immediate experiment. "I remember that evening as distinctly as if had been but yesterday," said Robert Stephenson in 1857. "Moodie came to our cottage about dusk, and asked if father had got back yet with the lamp. 'No.' 'Then I'll wait till he comes,' said Moodie; 'he can't be long now.'

"In about half an hour in came my father his face all radiant. He had the lamp with him! It was at once uncovered and shown to Moodie. Then it was filled with oil, trimmed and lighted.

"All was ready, only the head-viewer hadn't arrived. 'Run over to Benton for Nicol, Robert,' said my father to me, 'and ask him to come directly; say we're going down the pit to try the lamp.' By this time it was quite dark; and off I ran to bring Nicholas Wood. His house was at Benton about a mile off. There was a short cut through the church-yard, but just as I was about to pass the wicket, I saw what I thought was a white figure moving about amongst the gravestones. I took it for a ghost!

"My heart fluttered and I was in a great fright, but to Wood's house I must get, so I made the circuit of the church-yard; and when I got round to the other side, I looked, and lo! the figure was still there! But what do you think it was? Only the grave-digger plying his work at that late hour by the light of his lanthorn, set upon one of the grave-stones! I found Wood at home, and in a few minutes he was mounted and off to my father's. When I got back, I was told they had just left—it was about eleven—and gone down the shaft to try the lamp in one of the most dangerous parts of the mine."

Arrived at the bottom of the shaft with the lamp, the party directed their steps towards one of the foulest galleries in the pit, where the explosive gas was issuing through a blower in the roof of the mine with a loud hissing noise. By erecting some deal boarding round that part of the gallery into which the gas was escaping, the air was made more foul for the purpose of the experiment.

After waiting about an hour, Moodie, whose practical experience of fire-damp in pits was greater than that of either Stephenson or Wood, was requested to go into the place that had thus been made foul; and having done so he returned, and told them that the smell of the air was such that if a lighted candle were now introduced, an explosion must inevitably take place.

He cautioned Stephenson as to the danger both to themselves and to the pit if the gas took fire. But Stephenson declared his confidence in the safety of his lamp, and having lit the wick, he boldly proceeded with it towards the explosive air. The others, more timid and doubtful, hung back when they came within hearing of the blower; and apprehensive of the danger, they retired into a safe place, out of sight of the lamp, which gradually disappeared with its bearer in the recesses of the mine.

Advancing to the place of danger, and entering within the fouler air, his lighted lamp in hand, Stephenson held it firmly out in full current of the blower and within a few inches of its mouth! Thus exposed, the flame of the lamp at first increased, then flickered, and then went out; but there was no explosion of the gas. Returning to his companions who were still at a distance, he told them what had occurred.

Having now acquired somewhat more confidence, they advanced with him to a point from which they could observe him repeat his experiment, but still at a safe distance. They saw that when the lighted lamp was held within the explosive mixture, there was a great flame, the lamp became almost full of fire, and then it smothered out.

Again returning to his companions, he relighted the lamp and repeated the experiment several times with the same result. At length Wood and Moodie ventured to advance close to the fouled part of the pit; and in making some of the later trials, Mr. Wood himself held up the lighted lamp to the blower.

Before leaving the pit, Stephenson expressed his opinion that by an alteration of the lamp, which he then contemplated, he could make it burn better.

Samuel Smiles—*Life of George Stephenson.*

Rewrite this letter in simple English:
My dear Madam and Copperfield,

The fair land of promise lately blooming upon the horizon is again enveloped in impenetrable mists and for ever withdrawn from the eyes of a drifting wretch whose Doom is sealed! Another writ has been issued (in His Majesty's High Court of King's Bench at Westminster) in another cause of Heep *v.* Micawber, and the defendant in that cause is the prey of the sheriff having legal jurisdiction in this bailiwick.

> Now's the day and now's the hour,
> See the front of battle lower,
> See approach proud Edward's power—
> Chains and slavery.

Consigned to which and to a speedy end (for mental torture is not supportable beyond a certain point and that point I have attained my course is run. Bless you, bless you! Some future traveller, visiting from motives of curiosity, not unmingled, let us hope, with sympathy, the place of confinement allotted to debtors in this city, may, and I trust will, ponder, as he traces on its walls, inscribed with a rusty nail, the obscure initials, W.M. P.S. I reopen this letter to say our common friend Mr. Thomas Traddles (who has not yet left us and is looking extremely well) has paid the debt and costs, in the name of Miss Trotwood; and that myself and family are at the height of earthly bliss.

Charles Dickens—*David Copperfield.*

Write an account of the following conversation in indirect speech, reducing the number of words to 300.

Mr. Darcy was writing, and Miss Bingley, seated near him, was watching the progress of his letter and repeatedly calling off his attention by messages to his sister. Mr. Hurst and Mr. Bingley were at piquet, and Mrs. Hurst was observing their game. Elizabeth took up some needlework, and was sufficiently amused in attending to what passed between Darcy and his companion. The perpetual commendations of the lady, either on his handwriting, or on the evenness of his lines, or on the length of his letter, with the perfect unconcern with which her praises were received, formed a curious dialogue, and was exactly in unison with her opinion of each.

"How delighted Miss Darcy will be to receive such a letter!"

He made no answer.

"You write uncommonly fast."

"You are mistaken. I write rather slowly."

"How many letters you must have occasion to write in the course of a year! Letters of business too! How odious I should think them!"

"It is fortunate, then, that they fall to my lot instead of to yours."

"Pray tell your sister that I long to see her."

"I have already told her so once, by your desire."

"I am afraid you do not like your pen. Let me mend it for you. I mend pens remarkably well."

"Thank you,—but I always mend my own."

"How can you contrive to write so even?"

He was silent.

"Tell your sister I am delighted to hear of her improvement on the harp; and pray let her know that I am quite in raptures with her beautiful little design for a table, and I think it infinitely superior to Miss Grantley's."

"Will you give me leave to defer your raptures till I write again? At present I have no room to do them justice."

"Oh! it is of no consequence. I shall see her in January. But do you always write such charming long letters to her, Mr. Darcy?"

"They are generally long; but whether always charming it is not for me to determine."

"It is a rule with me that a person who can write a long letter with ease cannot write ill."

"That will not do for a compliment to Darcy, Caroline," cried her brother, "because he does not write with ease. He does not write with ease. He studies too much for words of four syllables. Do not you, Darcy?"

"My style of writing is very different from yours."

"Oh!" cried Miss Bingley, "Charles writes in the most

careless way imaginable. He leaves out half his words, and blots the rest."

"My ideas flow so rapidly that I have no time to express them by which means my letters sometimes convey no ideas at all to my correspondents."

"Your humility, Mr. Bingley," said Elizabeth, "must disarm reproof."

"Nothing is more deceitful," said Darcy, "than the appearance of humility. It is often only carelessness of opinion, and sometimes an indirect boast."

"And which of the two do you call my little recent piece of modesty?"

"The indirect boast; for you are really proud of your defects in writing, because you consider them as proceeding from a rapidity of thought and carelessness of execution, which, if not estimable, you think at least highly interesting. The power of doing anything with quickness is always much prized by the possessor, and often without any attention to the imperfection of the performance. When you told Mr. Bennett this morning, that if you ever resolved on quitting Netherfield you should be gone in five minutes, you meant it to be a sort of panegyric, or compliment to yourself—and yet what is there so very laudable in a precipitance which must leave very necessary business undone, and can be of no real advantage to yourself or any one else?"

"Nay," cried Bingley, "this is too much to remember at night all the foolish things that were said in the morning. And yet, upon my honour, I believed what I said of myself to be true, and I believe it at this moment. At least, therefore, I did not assume the character of needless precipitance merely to show off before the ladies."

"I dare say you believed it; but I am by no means convinced that you would be gone with such celerity. Your conduct would be quite as dependent on chance as that of any man I know; and if, as you were mounting your horse, a friend were to say, 'Bingley, you had better stay till next week,' you would probably do it, you would probably not go—and at another word, might stay a month."

"You have only proved by this," cried Elizabeth, "that Mr.

Bingley did not do justice to his own disposition. You have shown him off now much more than he did himself." "I am exceedingly gratified," said Bingley, "by your converting what my friend says into a compliment on the sweetness of my temper. But I am afraid you are giving it a turn which that gentleman did by no means intend; for he would certainly think the better of me if, under such a circumstance, I were to give a flat denial and ride off as fast as I could."

"Would Mr. Darcy then consider the rashness of your original intention as atoned for by your obstinacy in adhering to it?"

"Upon my word, I cannot exactly explain the matter. Darcy must speak for himself."

"You expect me to account for opinions which you choose to call mine, but which I have never acknowledged. Allowing the case, however, to stand, according to your representation, you must remember, Miss Bennett, that the friend who is supposed to desire his return to the house, and the delay of his plan, has merely desired it, asked it without offering one argument in favour of its property."

"To yield readily,—easily—to the *persuasion* of a friend is no merit with you."

"To yield without conviction is no compliment to the understanding of either."

"You appear to me, Mr. Darcy, to allow nothing for the influence of friendship and affection. A regard for the requester would often make one readily yield to a request, without waiting for arguments to reason one into it. I am not particularly speaking of such a case as you have supposed about Mr. Bingley. We may as well wait, perhaps, till the circumstance occurs before we discuss the discretion of his behaviour thereupon. But in general and ordinary cases between friend and friend where one of them is desired by the other to change a resolution of no very great moment, should you think ill of that person for complying with the desire without waiting to be argued into it?"

"Will it not be advisable, before we proceed on this subject, to arrange with rather more precision the degree of im-

portance which is to appertain to his request, as well as the degree of intimacy subsisting between the parties?"

"By all means," cried Bingley; "let us hear all the particulars, not forgetting their comparative height and size; for that will have more weight in the argument. Miss Bennet, than you may be aware of, I assure you, that if Darcy were not such a great tall fellow, in comparison with myself, I should not pay him half so much deference. I declare I do not know a more awful object than Darcy, on particular occasions and in particular places; at his own house, especially, and of a Sunday evening when he has nothing to do."

Mr. Darcy smiled; but Elizabeth thought she could perceive that he was rather offended, and therefore checked her laugh. Miss Bingley warmly resented the indignity he had received, in an expostulation with her brother for talking such nonsense.

"I see your design, Bingley," said his friend. "You dislike an argument, and want to silence this."

"Perhaps I do. Arguments are too much like disputes. If you and Miss Bennet will defer yours till I am out of the room, I shall be very thankful; and then you may say whatever you like of me." "What you ask," said Elizabeth, "is no sacrifice on my side; and Mr. Darcy had much better finish his letter."

Mr. Darcy took her advice, and did finish his letter.

Jane Austen—*Pride and Prejudice.*

* * * *

Write a summary of the ideas expressed in the following passage:

It is for this are precious quality of truthfulness that I delight in many Dutch paintings, which lofty-minded people despise. I find a source of delicious sympathy in these faithful pictures of a monotonous, homely existence, which has been the fate of so many more among my fellow mortal than a life of pomp or of absolute indigence, of tragic suffering or of world-stirring actions. I turn, without shrinking, from cloud-borne angels, from prophets, sibyls, and heroic warriors, to an old woman bending over her flowerpot, or eating her solitary

dinner, while the noonday light, softened perhaps by a screen of leaves, falls on her mob-cap, and just touches the rim of her spinning-wheel, and her stone jug, and all those cheap common things which are the precious necessaries of life to her; or I turn to that village wedding, kept between four brown walls, where an awkward bridegroom opens the dance with a high-shouldered, broad-faced bride, while elderly and middle-aged friends look on, with very irregular noses and lips, and probably with quart pots in their hands, but with an expression of unmistakable contentment and good will. "Foh!" says my idealistic friend, "what vulgar details! What good is there in taking all these pains to give an exact likeness of old women and clowns? What a low phase of life! What clumsy, ugly people!"

But, bless us, things may be lovable that are not altogether handsome, I hope. I am not at all sure that the majority of the human race have not been ugly, and even among those "lords of their kind" the British, squat figures, illshapen nostrils, and dingy complexions are not startling exceptions...Yet there is a great deal of family love amongst us. I have a friend or two whose class of features is such that the Apollo curl on the summit of their brows would be decidedly trying, yet to my certain knowledge tender hearts have beaten for them, and their miniatures, flattering, but still not lovely, are kissed in secret by motherly lips. I have seen many an excellent matron, who could never in her best days have been handsome, and yet she had a packet of yellow love-letters in a private drawer, and sweet children showered kisses on her sallow cheeks. And I believe there have been plenty of young heroes, of middle stature and feeble beards, who have felt sure they could never love anything more insignificant than a Diana, and yet have found themselves in middle life happily settled with a wife who waddles. Yes! thank God, human feeling is like the mighty rivers that bless the earth: it does not wait for beauty — it flows with resistless force and brings beauty with it.

All honour and reverence to the divine beauty of form! Let us cultivate it to the utmost in men, women and children — in our gardens and in our houses. But let us love that other beauty too which lies in no secret of proportion, but in the secret of deep human sympathy. Paint us an angel if you can, with a floating violet robe, and a face paled by celestial light;

paint us yet oftener a Madonna, turning her mild face upward and opening her arms to welcome the divine glory; but do not impose on us any aesthetic rules which shall banish from the region of Art those old women scraping carrots with their work-worn hands, those heavy clowns taking holiday in a dingy pothouse, those rounded backs and stupid, weather-beaten faces that have bent over the spade and done the rough work of the world — those homes with their tin pans, their brown pitchers, their rough curs, and their clusters of onions. In this world there are so many of these common, coarse people, who have no picturesque, sentimental wretchedness! It is so needful we should remember their existence, else we may happen to leave them quite out of our religion and philosophy, and frame lofty theories which only fit a world of extremes. Therefore let Art always remind us of them; therefore let us always have men ready to give the loving pains of a life to the faithful representing of common-place things, and delight in showing how kindly the light of heaven falls on them. There are few prophets in the world, few sublimely beautiful women, few heroes. I can't afford to give all my love and reverence to such rareties: I want a great deal of those feelings for my everyday fellow-men, especially for the few in the fore-ground of the great multitude whose faces I know, whose hands I touch, for whom I have to make way with kindly courtesy. Neither are picturesque lazzaroni or romantic criminals half so frequent as your common labourer, who gets his own bread, and eats it vulgarly but creditably with his own pocket-knife. It is more needful that I should have a fibre of sympathy connecting me with that vulgar citizen who weighs out my sugar in a vilely-assorted cravat and waist-coat, than with the handsomest rascal in red scarf and green feathers; more needful that my heart should swell with loving admiration at some trait of gentle goodness in the faulty people who sit at the same hearth with me, or in the clergyman of my own parish, who is perhaps rather too corpulent, than at the deeds of heroes whom I shall never know except by hearsay, or at the sublimest abstract of all clerical graces that was ever conceived by an able novelist.

George Eliot — *Adam Bede.*

* * * *

Summarize the following passage, emphasising the stages through which the writer follows the village child:

I pique myself on knowing by sight, and by name, almost every man and boy in our parish from eight years old to eighty — I cannot say quite so much for the women. They — the elder of them at least — are more within doors, more hidden. One does not meet them in the fields and highways; their duties are close housekeepers and live under cover. The girls, to be sure, are often enough in sight, "true creatures of the element," basking in the sun, racing in the wind, rolling in the dust, dabbling in the water — hardier, dirtier, noisier, more sturdy defiers of heat and cold, and wet, than boys themselves. One sees them quite often enough to know them; but then the little eves alter so much at every step of their approach to womanhood, that recognition becomes difficult, if not impossible. It is not merely growing, — boys grow; — it is positive, perplexing and perpetual change; a butterfly hath not undergone more transmogrifications in its progress through life than a village belle in her arrival at the age of seventeen.

The first appearance of the little lass is something after the manner of a caterpillar, crawling and creeping upon the grass, set down to roll by some tired little nurse of an elder sister, or mother with her hands full. There it lies — a fat, boneless, rosy piece of health, aspiring to the accomplishments of walking and talking; stretching its chubby limbs; scrambling and sprawling; laughing and roaring; there it sits, in all the dignity of the baby, adorned in a pink-checked frock, a blue-spotted pinafore and a little white cap, tolerably clean and quite whole. One is forced to ask if it be boy or girl; for these hardy country rogues are all alike, open-eyed, and weather-stained, and nothing fearing. There is no more mark of sex in the countenance than in the dress.

In the next stage, dirt-incrusted enough to pass for the chrysalis, if it were not so very unquiet, the gender remains equally uncertain. It is a fine, stout, curly-pated creature of three or four playing and rolling about amongst grass or mud all day long; shouting, jumping, screeching — the happiest compound of noise and idleness, rags and rebellion, that ever trod the earth.

Then comes a sunburnt gypsy of six, beginning to grow tall and thin, and to find the cares of the world gathering about her; with a pitcher in one hand, a mop in the other, and old straw bonnet of ambiguous shape, half hiding her tangled hair; a tat-

tered stiff petticoat, once green, hanging below an equally tattered cotton frock, once purple; her longing eyes fixed on a game of baseball at the corner of the green, till she reaches the cottage door, flings down the mop and pitcher, and darts off to her companions, quite regardless of the storm of scolding with which the mother follows her runaway steps.

So the world wags till ten; then the little damsel gets admission to the charity school, and trips mincingly thither every morning, dressed in the old-fashioned blue gown, and white cap and tippet, and bib and apron of that primitive institution, looking as demure as a Nun, and as tidy; her thoughts fixed on button-holes and spelling books — those ensigns of promotion; despising dirt and baseballs, and all their joys.

Then at twelve the little lass comes home again, uncapped, untippeted, unschooled; brown as a berry, wild as a colt, busy as a bee — working in the fields, digging in the garden, frying rashers, boiling potatoes, shelling beans, darning stockings, nursing children, feeding pigs; — all these employments varied by occasional fits of romping and flirting, and idle play, according as the nascent coquetry, or the lurking love of sport happens to preponderate; merry, and pretty, and good with all her faults. It would be well if a country girl could stand at thirteen. Then she is charming. But the clock will move forward and at fourteen she gets a service in a neighbouring town; and her next appearance is in the perfection of the butterfly state, fluttering, glittering, inconstant, vain, — the gayest and gaudiest insect that ever skimmed over a village green. And this is the true progress of a rustic beauty, the average lot of our country girls; so they spring up, flourish, change and disappear. Some indeed marry and fix amongst us and then ensues another set of changes, rather more gradual perhaps, but quite as sure, till grey hairs, wrinkles and linsey-woolsey* wind up the picture.

Miss Mitford — *Our Village.*

* Linsey-woolsey is a material of linen and wool mixed.

* * * *

It will be interesting to compare the forgoing account of the progress of a country girl through life with the following very famous summary of the life of man, by Shakespeare. The student can also make a precis of this passage of blank verse,

making it of similar length to his precis of the passage from *Our Village*.

All the world's stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in his nurse's arms.
And then the whining schoolboy with his satchel.
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad.
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixty age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again towards childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Shakespeare — *As You Like It.*

* * * *

Make a short summary (not more than 250 words) of Washington Irving's visit to Stratford-on-Avon.

I had come to Stratford on a poetical pilgrimage. My first visit was to the house where Shakespeare was born, and where, according to tradition, he was brought up to his father's craft of wool-combing. It is a small mean-looking edifice of wood and plaster, a true nesting place of genius, which seems to delight in hatching its offspring in by-corners. The walls of its squalid chambers, are covered with names and inscriptions in every language, by pilgrims of all nations, ranks and conditions, from the prince to the peasant, and present a simple but striking instance of the spontaneous and universal homage of mankind to the great poet of nature.

The house is shown by a garrulous old lady with a frosty red face, lighted up by a cold blue anxious eye, and garnished with artificial locks of flaxen hair, curling from under an exceedingly dirty cap. She was peculiarly assiduous in exhibiting the relics with which this, like all other celebrated shrines, abounds. There was the shattered stock of the very gun with which Shakespeare shot the deer on his poaching exploits. There, too, was his tobacco-box which proves that he was a rival smoker to Sir Walter Raleigh; the sword with which he played Hamlet; and the identical lantern with which Friar Laurence discovered Romeo and Juliet at the tomb. There was an ample supply also, of Shakespeare's mulberry tree, which seems to have as extraordinary powers of self-multiplication as the wood of the true cross, of which there is enough extant to build a ship of the line.

The most favourite object of curiosity, however, is Shakespeare's chair. It stands in the chimney nook of a small gloomy chamber, just behind what was his father's shop. Here he may many a time have sat when a boy, watching the slow-revolving spit with all the longing of an urchin; or of an evening, listening to the cronies and gossips of Stratford, dealing forth churchyard tales and legendary anecdotes of the troublesome times of England. In this chair it is the custom of every one who visits the house to sit. Whether this be done with the hope of imbibing any of the inspiration of the bard, I am at a loss to say: I merely mention the fact: and mine hostess privately assured me that, though built of solid oak, such was the fervent zeal of devotees, that the chair had to be new bottomed at least once in three years.

I am always of easy faith in such matters, and am ever willing

to be deceived, when the deceit is pleasure and costs nothing. I am, therefore, a ready believer in relics, legends, and local anecdotes of goblins and great men; and would advise all travellers who travel for their gratification to be the same. What is it to us whether these stories be true or false, so long as we can persuade ourselves into the belief of them, and enjoy all the charm of the reality? There is nothing like good-humoured resolute credulity in these matters; and on this occasion I went even so far as willingly to believe the claims of mine hostess to a lineal descent from the poet, when, unluckily for my faith, she put into my hands a play of her own composition, which set all belief in her consanguinity at defiance.

From the birthplace of Shakespeare a few paces brought me to his grave. He lies buried in the chancel of the parish church, a large and venerable pile, mouldering with age, but richly ornamented. It stands on the banks of the Avon, on an embowered point, and separated by adjoining gardens from the suburbs of the town. Its situation is quiet and retired: the river runs murmuring at the foot of the churchyard, and the elms which grow upon its banks droop their branches into its clear bosom. An avenue of limes, the boughs of which are curiously interlaced, so as to form in summer an arched way of foliage, leads up from the gate of the yard to the church porch. The graves are overgrown with grass; the grey tombstones, some of them nearly sunk into the earth, are half covered with moss, which has likewise tinted the reverend old building. Small birds have built their nests among the cornices and fissures of the walls, and keep up a continual flutter and chirping; and rooks are sailing and cawing about its lofty grey spire.

In the course of my rambles I met with the grey headed sexton, Edmonds, and accompanied him home to get the key of the church. He had lived in Stratford, man and boy, for eighty years, and seemed still to consider himself a vigorous man, with the trivial exception that he had nearly lost the use of his legs for a few years past. His dwelling was a cottage, looking out upon the Avon, and its bordering meadows; and was a picture of neatness, order and comfort which pervade the humblest dwellings in this country. A low whitewashed room, with a stone floor carefully scrubbed, served for parlour, kitchen, and hall. Rows of pewter and earthen dishes glittered along the dresser. On an

old oaken table well rubbed and polished, lay the family Bible and Prayer Book, and the drawer contained the family library, composed of about half a score of well-thumbed volumes. An ancient clock, that important article of cottage furniture, ticked on the opposite side of the room; with a bright warming pan hanging on one side of it, and the old man's horn-handled Sunday cane on the other. The fire place, as usual, was wide and deep. In one corner sat the old man's granddaughter sewing, a pretty blue-eyed girl — and in the opposite corner was a superannuated crony, whom he addressed by the name of John Ange, and who, I found, had been his companion from childhood. They had played together in infancy; they had worked together in manhood; they were now tottering about and gossiping away the evening of life; and in a short time they will probably be buried together in the neighbouring churchyard. It is not often that we see two streams of existence running thus evenly and tranquilly side by side; it is only in such quiet "bosom scenes" of life that they are to be met with.

I had hoped to gather some traditionary anecdotes of the bard from these ancient chroniclers; but they had nothing new to impart. The long interval during which Shakespeare's writings lay in comparative neglect has spread its shadow over his history; and it is his good or evil lot that scarcely anything remains to his biographers but a scanty handful of conjectures.

I was grieved to hear these two worthy men speak very dubiously of the eloquent dame who shows the Shakespeare house. John Ange shook his head when I mentioned her valuable and inexhaustible collection of relics, particularly her remains of the mulberry tree; and the old sexton even expressed a doubt as to Shakespeare having been born in her house. I soon discovered that he looked upon her mansion with an evil eye, as a rival to the poet's tomb; the latter having comparatively but few visitors. Thus it is that historians differ at the very outset, and mere pebbles make the stream of truth diverge into different channels even at the fountain head.

We approached the church through the avenue of limes, and entered through a Gothic porch, highly ornamented, with carved doors of massive oak. The interior is spacious, and the architecture and embellishments superior to those of most country churches.

The tomb of Shakespeare is in the chancel. The place is solemn and sepulchral. Tall elms wave before the pointed windows, and the Avon, which runs at a short distance from the walls, keeps up a low, perpetual murmur. A flat stone marks the spot where the bard is buried. There are four lines inscribed on it, said to have been written by himself, and which have in them something extremely awful. If they are indeed his own, they show that solicitude about the quiet of the grave which seems natural to fine sensibilities and thoughtful minds.

> Good friend, for Jesus' sake, forbear
> To dig the dust enclosed here.
> Blessed be he that spares these stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones.

Just over the grave, in a niche of the wall, is a bust of Shakespeare, put up shortly after his death, and considered as a resemblance. The aspect is pleasant and serene, with a finely arched forehead, and I thought I could read in it clear indications of that cheerful, social disposition, by which he was as much characterized among his contemporaries as by the vastness of his genius. The inscription mentions his age at the time of his decease — fifty-three years; an untimely death for the world; for what fruit might not have been expected from the golden autumn of such a mind, sheltered as it was from the stormy vicissitudes of life, and flourishing in the sunshine of popular and royal favour.

The inscription on the tombstone has not been without its effect. It has prevented the removal of his remains from the bosom of his native place to Westminster Abbey, which was at one time contemplated. A few years since, also, as some labourers were digging to make an adjoining vault, the earth caved in so as to make a vacant space almost like an arch, through which one might have reached into his grave. No one, however, presumed to meddle with his remains so awfully guarded by a malediction; and lest any of the idle or the curious, or any collector of relics, should be tempted to commit depredations, the old sexton kept watch over the place for two days, until the vault was finished and the aperture closed again. He told me that he had made bold to look in at the hole, but could see neither coffin nor bones; nothing but dust. It was something, I thought, to have seen the dust of Shakespeare.

On returning to my inn, I could not but reflect on the singular gift of the poet; to be able thus to spread the magic of his mind over the very face of nature; to give to things and places a charm and character not their own, and to turn his "working-day world" unto a perfect fairy-land. He is, indeed, the true enchanter, whose spell operates, not upon the senses, but upon the imagination of the heart. Under the wizard influence of Shakespeare, I had been walking all day in a complete delusion. I had surveyed the landscape through the prism of poetry, which tinged every object with the hues of the rainbow. I had been surrounded with fancied beings; with mere airy nothings, conjured up by poetic power, yet which to me had all the charm of reality. I had heard Jacques soliloquise beneath his oak; had beheld the fair Rosalind and her companion adventuring through the woodlands; and above all, had been once more present in spirit with fat Jack Falstaff and his contemporaries, from the august Justice Shallow, down to the gentle Master Slender and the sweet Ann Page.

As I crossed the bridge over the Avon on my return, I paused to contemplate the distant church in which the poet lies buried, and was grateful for the malediction which has kept his ashes undisturbed in its quiet and hallowed vaults. What would a crowded corner in Westminster Abbey have been, compared with this revered pile which seems to stand in beautiful loneliness as his sole mausoleum! He who has sought renown about the world, and has reaped a full harvest of worldly favour, will find, after all, that there is no love, no admiration, no applause, so sweet to the soul as that which springs up in his native place. It is there that he seeks to be gathered in peace and honour among his kindred and his early friends.

Washington Irving — *The Sketch Book.*

KEY TO EXERCISES 3 AND 4.

Exercise 3.

(i) Strike while the iron is hot.
(ii) His latch key was the thin edge of the wedge towards complete independence.
(iii) One man's meat is another man's poison.

or

Every cloud has a silver lining.
(iv) It's a long lane that has no turning.
(v) A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
(vi) You must cut your coat according to your cloth.
(vii) Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
(viii) Ill weeds grow apace.
(ix) Brevity is the soul of wit.
(x) Forewarned is fore-armed.

Exercise 4.

(i) His face crumpled into tears.
(ii) His dog wagged its tail.
(iii) My bed is as old as myself.
(iv) The walker was covered in dust.
(v) He remained motionless.
(vi) Fishing is not spoilt by bad weather.
(vii) My shaving took a long time because my razor was blunt.
(viii) Men usually overrate their own intellects.

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